

Strikes on Iraq were 'mistake' — French FM

PARIS (AFP) — The U.S.-British strikes on Iraq last month were a "mistake" which "resolved nothing... [and] weakened the authority of the U.N. Security Council," French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine said Sunday. Vedrine, making the remarks to the French commercial radio station Europe 1, said the attacks were a "unilateral decision" by the United States and Britain. "On Iraq, the U.S. approach is to inflict punishment, whereas our approach is to look for a solution," said Vedrine. He added France was the only country with "a vision" to end the crisis between Iraq and international community.

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Regent receives call from Saleh

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Sunday received a telephone call from Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who congratulated the Crown Prince on His Majesty King Hussein's full recovery. Saleh wished King Hussein a safe return home.

Centre-left PDP wins Nigerian state elections

LAGOS (AFP) — The centre-left Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) won Nigeria's weekend regional elections, confirming its place as the country's leading political party, official election results showed Sunday. With 33 of 35 states having declared results Sunday, the PDP of former military ruler General Olusegun Obasanjo won 18 governorships, against nine for the centre-right All People's Party and six for the radical Alliance for Democracy. (See story on page 4)

More than 90 massacred in Colombia

BOGOTA (R) — Churchgoers were among the latest victims of Colombia's right-wing death squads who have killed more than 90 people in a bloody rampage across four northern provinces since Thursday, authorities said on Sunday. The most horrifying incident occurred in Playon de Oro, a village in Magdalena province, where alleged members of the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (AUC) slaughtered at least 21 people on Saturday.

Kuwait journalists brand Israel visit 'irresponsible'

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Kuwait's journalists' association on Sunday branded a visit by one of its members to Israel "an irresponsible act" and warned it would "take appropriate measures." Hamed Buyabes's visit to the Jewish state creates "a dangerous precedent and harms Kuwait's press which refuses all contact with the Zionist enemy," said a statement quoted by the official KUNA news agency. Buyabes told Arabic newspapers in London that he had visited Israel in mid-December for interviews with its leadership, including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

DNA tests end rumours Clinton fathered child

WASHINGTON (AFP) — DNA tests have proved that U.S. President Bill Clinton did not father the son of a former associate, Time magazine reported Sunday. The weekly reported that tests showed blood samples taken from Debbie Ann Williams and her 13-year-old son Danny did not match the president's DNA. "There was no match. Not even close," the news magazine reported, citing a source at the tabloid Star newspaper which authorised the tests. The report ends years of speculation over the affair — accounts of which first surfaced in U.S. tabloid newspapers in 1992.

Senator calls impeachment 'pile of dung'

WASHINGTON (AFP) — In an unusually blunt remark, a leading Democratic senator on Sunday called the House move to impeach President Bill Clinton a "pile of dung." Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa told Fox television that the Senate's unanimous vote on Friday to begin the impeachment trial later this week "in no way legitimises the sham, partisan action taken by the House." "All we can do is hope to cloak ourselves with some dignity in handling this pile of dung, if I might use that phrase, that a reckless, partisan House has handed us," he said.

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New clashes in Hebron over Israeli security clampdown



Sara Reschly, 26, from Mount Pleasant, Iowa, right, screams Sunday at Israeli border policemen, telling them not to shoot at Palestinian demonstrators during a march in the West Bank town of Hebron. Reschly and another member of a Chicago-based human rights organisation, Christian Peacemaker Teams, were detained for interfering with the police (AP photo).

bullets, witnesses said.

During the confrontation, Israeli troops arrested Canadian and U.S. members of a Christian pacifist group who tried to break up clashes between Palestinian stonethrowers and soldiers, witnesses said.

Despite the move, some 250 Palestinians waving Palestinian flags and portraits of PNA President Yasser Arafat held a protest demonstration against the continuing curfew in the Israeli-ruled enclave and other army restrictions on the city.

The crowd approached the Israeli sector and threw stones and bottles at Israeli soldiers who responded by firing teargas, stun grenades and rubber-encased metal

and Pierre Shantz of Canada.

"They were trying to get the soldiers to stop shooting and the Palestinians to stop throwing stones," a member of the group said.

There was no immediate comment by the Israeli army.

The Christian Peacemaker Team has for several years maintained between five and 10 members in Hebron to promote non-violence between Palestinians and some 400 militant Jewish settlers living in the centre of the city of 140,000.

The latest trouble began Jan. 4 when unidentified gunmen opened fire on a van bringing settlers into the city, wounding two women.

Israel says the attackers fled into the Palestinian-run sector of the city.

Tensions jumped further on Wednesday after Israeli soldiers killed a mentally-handicapped Palestinian man who approached an army patrol holding a toy gun.

Under peace accords between Israel and the PNA, the army withdrew from most of Hebron in January 1997 but remains in control of the final fifth of the city where the Jewish settlers live near the Tomb of the Patriarchs, a site holy to both Jews and Muslims.

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Japanese FM vows more aid to PNA, presses Israel on pullbacks

RAMALLAH (AFP) — Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Kourumura offered the Palestinian National Authority another \$20 million in aid Sunday and vowed continued support until the Palestinians realise their "hopes and rights" for self-determination.

In a meeting with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and a later speech to the Palestinian legislature, Kourumura also promised to press Israeli leaders to end their suspension of the recent Wye River peace accord, which requires further Israeli

pullbacks from the West Bank.

"In my meetings tomorrow, I will sincerely ask Israeli leaders to implement existing agreements," Kourumura told the Palestinian deputies of his planned talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon and Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai.

The Japanese government and people, standing on the people's side, will continue to provide our utmost moral and economic support to the Palestinian people," he said.

Kourumura arrived in the West Bank earlier Sunday after visits to Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan and oversaw the inauguration of a new hospital built with Japanese aid in the Palestinian enclave of Jericho.

While Kourumura spoke out strongly in favor of Palestinian "self-determination," he shied away from questions about whether Arafat should go ahead with his declared intention of unilaterally declaring independence if negotiations with Israel remain stalled.

Iraq's parliament slams 'unfair' U.N. resolutions

BAGHDAD (AP) — After two days of bellicose threats, the Iraqi parliament on Sunday adopted a vaguely-worded statement on the latest spat with the United Nations.

Legislators in debate Saturday and earlier Sunday had called on the government to rescind its 1994 recognition of neighbouring Kuwait and to stop honouring all U.N. resolutions related to Iraq.

But the statement adopted by parliament merely called for further discussions of what the statement actually meant. Hummadi declined to discuss it with reporters.

The statement passed Sunday was far different from a draft circulated on Saturday, which had called for reversing Iraq's recognition of Kuwait and urged the government to press ahead with its defiance of the U.S.-imposed "no-fly" zones.

And it said Iraq "holds the Saudi and Kuwaiti regimes fully responsible for the U.S. and British aggression on Iraq" and reserves the right to seek compensation.

U.S. and British forces launched missile and rocket attacks on Iraq Dec. 16-19 to punish it for failing to cooperate with U.N. weapons inspectors.

Most U.S. forces in the region are

Egypt urges Iraq to change attitude

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa Sunday called on Iraq to "change its tone" in dealing with Egypt and other Arab countries, in the latest round of a mounting war of words between Baghdad and Cairo.

"The Arabs must be as dear to the Iraqis as Iraq and the Iraqis are to the Arabs," he told journalists. "We call upon our brothers in Iraq to cooperate with their Arab brothers," he said.

His call for Iraq to change its attitude came after members of the Iraqi parliament meeting on Saturday blamed Kuwait and Saudi Arabia for December's four days of U.S.-British air strikes against Iraq.

Musa regretted the Iraqi parliament's decision describing it as the result of anger and frustration. "In spite of that, we must all work to alleviate the sufferings of the Iraqi people," he said.

after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, which sparked the 1991 Gulf war.

Iraq has been trying to get the international body to lift the trade sanctions, imposed in 1990, that severely restrict its sale of oil and other financial

December bombings.

One legislator after another on Sunday urged the Iraqi leadership to end all cooperation with the United Nations and annul its recognition of Kuwait.

"I demand the annulment of all the related resolutions passed by the Security Council, including the recognition of Kuwait and its new borders," said Hayfa Mohammad.

Sunday's parliament statement made no mention of the U.N. Special Commission, which oversees the search for Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

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Home News

Sixty-six deputies seek time on House floor to air concerns about 1999 budget proposal

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament Sunday resumed its debate of the Kingdom's 1999 fiscal budget, with many deputies demanding that the government consider the Finance Committee's report and recommendations concerning social and economic affairs.

Deputy Sidki Shabat was the first to address the House in its second day of debate. Shabat urged the government to implement the Finance Committee's recommendations, especially those focused on combating poverty through supporting the National Aid and the Employment and Development Funds. The two foundations have the potential to finance income-generating projects that employ Jordanian workers, he said.

At the session attended by Prime Minister Fayed Tarawneh and the Council of Ministers, the deputy pointed out that the lands

in the southeastern regions within the Disi water basin and Rum are no longer exploited for grain production because the government has refused to purchase the produce at subsidised prices to encourage investors to increase their output.

Shabat called on the government to overcome Israeli obstacles to Jordan's trade with exports to the Palestinian self-rule areas.

Deputy Mohammad Bataineh criticised the 10-year IMF-led economic restructuring programme for failing to meet its targets.

He said that one reason for the failure was the imposition of the sales tax and the high interest rates on borrowing. Bataineh said the rates harm small-size industrial projects, contribute to capital flight and reduced the amounts of investments.

The deputy added that a combination of reduced investments and an

increase in taxes further aggravated the country's economic recession and consequently, has led to increased unemployment and poverty.

Deputy Ghazi Al Fayez called on the government to reconsider its investment policy and to extend more aid to the poor districts and needy families. The Central Bedouins deputy demanded that the government rescind a recent decision to collect 250 fils for each cubic metre of water consumed for agricultural purposes.

Deputy Mithel Ruheimi urged the government to increase the salaries of the military and civil servants to help them meet the skyrocketing cost of living. He also demanded that the government retain its subsidy of basic foodstuffs sold to needy families.

Deputy Nayef Moulai pointed out that Israeli obstacles blocking Jordanian exports to the Palestinian territories, as well as the semi-closure of the

Iraqi markets, brought a drop in revenues and an increase in expenses, deeply hurting the national economy.

Deputy Adnan Aqrabawi said nothing in the 1999 budget, presented to the Parliament last month by Minister of Finance Michael Murtu, gives cause for optimism or satisfaction.

According to the sources, Ministry of Water and Irrigation Secretary General Qusai Quteishah is tipped to be appointed as director of the new power distribution firm while Chairman of the Board of Arab Potash Company Ali Nsour will assume the reigns of the power generation company. Minister of Water and Energy Hanif Mulki will be the president of the transmission, sources said.

The officials, who requested anonymity, neither gave further details nor

New electricity sector appointments in the works to shore up restructuring

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — The government is expected to announce the appointments of three directors for the recently-formed power distribution, generation and transmission companies in its drive to restructure the energy sector, officials said Sunday.

According to the sources, Ministry of Water and Irrigation Secretary General Qusai Quteishah is tipped to be appointed as director of the new power distribution firm while Chairman of the Board of Arab Potash Company Ali Nsour will assume the reigns of the power generation company. Minister of Water and Energy Hanif Mulki will be the president of the transmission, sources said.

According to Mulki, amendments to the 1996 Electricity Law, in line with the government's policy to restructure the sector, are

Jordan Times, Monday, January 11, 1999

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a date for the formal announcement of the appointments.

In December, Mulki said the committee in charge of privatising the electricity sector completed necessary measures to restructure the sector, and registered the entities with the Companies Comptroller at the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

Mulki added that the new companies would begin operating independently as of Jan. 1, 1999, and that the government will conduct financial feasibility studies on power distribution and generation to allow the private sector's participation in the two companies. The transmission entity will remain in government hands.

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is 971 megawatts (mw). With the expansion of the Aqaba Thermal Power Station, due to be completed this year, power generation will increase to 1,361 mw.

Jordan can also tap into electricity through the regional power grid. The first phase of a five-nation regional power grid linking the Kingdom, Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Turkey was inaugurated last month with the opening of the Cairo-Ammar grid.

However, the country needs an additional 100mw annually beginning the year 2002. Companies will be asked to submit two bids, one for a combined cycle plant based on diesel or gas, depending on availability, and the other for a steam cycle plant, which will use heavy fuel oil — a less environment-friendly option because of high sulphur content.

France to push to revive family reunification programme

By Lima Nabil

AMMAN — France has embarked on a comprehensive offensive to revive its refugee family reunion programme, a tenant of the multilateral track of the Middle East peace process.

The process has been dormant for the past three years.

Stephane Gompertz, deputy director of the Middle East Department at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, made the announcement Sunday and said that Paris was preparing for conference on the Palestinian refugees problem at the Red Sea resort of Sharm al Sheikh in Egypt by the end of January.

Gompertz, who visited Jordan during a Middle East tour that also includes

also Egypt, Palestine and Israel, noted in an interview with the Jordan Times that no progress has been achieved so far in implementing the family reunion programme because of the deadlock in the Middle East peace process.

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Stephane Gompertz, deputy director of the Middle East Department at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, made the announcement Sunday and said that Paris was preparing for conference on the Palestinian refugees problem at the Red Sea resort of Sharm al Sheikh in Egypt by the end of January.

Gompertz said the committee will pursue its

endeavours, and France will continue to back its work until the world community finds an equitable solution to the refugees problem.

The committee began implementing the family reunion at the rate of only 2,000 families annually because of Israel's refusal to increase the quota, said Gompertz, who noted that most returnees went to the Gaza Strip after Israel posed difficulties to those who tried to return to the West Bank. He added that France is still trying to increase the quota.

The past three years have witnessed a series of informal meetings to discuss this issue, but the concerned parties — Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Israel, France, Canada and Norway — are hoping to hold a formal meeting in Egypt later this month to discuss the problem, said Gompertz.

He added that the ministry is calling on the Armed Forces and other public institutions to get out their shovels to support the effort, and that the forest near the new building will be named after Jordanian martyrs.

Khreisha said the ministry has an annual plan to plant an 20,000-dunum area with forest trees.

The country's total cultivated area now stands at 1,320 million dunums, constituting less than one per cent of the overall area of the Kingdom.

Director of the Range and Forestation Department Musa Abbadi said that at least eight million tree saplings have been produced for this year's agricultural season, half of which will be planted in the range, forestation areas, and pasture lands while the rest will be distributed free of charge to various organisations, farmers, and individuals.

Arbour Day celebrations planned

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will celebrate Arbor Day on January 15 with a tree-planting ceremony hosted under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, at the site of the complex of the Ministry of Agriculture on the Airport Road, Minister of Agriculture Mijhem Khreisha said.

The minister said the Crown Prince will lay the foundation stone of the ministry's new building.

Khreisha said that at the ceremony, "we are looking

forward to seeing every Jordanian voluntarily taking part in planting trees and saplings."

He added that the ministry is calling on the Armed Forces and other public institutions to get out their shovels to support the effort, and that the forest near the new building will be named after Jordanian martyrs.

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News in Brief

Royal Family attends, hosts iftar

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, hosted an iftar banquet Sunday at the Sports City for senior Armed Forces officers, Public Security Department, General Intelligence Department and Civil Defence Department. Prince Hassan and the audience performed the Maghreb prayers. Meanwhile, Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Sunday participated in an iftar banquet hosted by the Greater Amman Municipality for the Um Al Hussein Orphanage marking His Majesty King Hussein's recovery. During the event, Princess Basma praised the orphanage for its efforts. The Princess distributed gifts and clothes to the orphanage's children.

Mamser visits Jerash

JERASH (Petra) — The government announced that it has provided JD1 million to the needy, orphans and handicapped around the Kingdom since the beginning of the Holy Month of Ramadan. During an inspection visit to Jerash governorate, Minister of Social Development Mohammad Kheir Mamser said another JD250,000 were provided by other local, Arab and Islamic organisations, distributed 40 items of in-kind assistance to underprivileged families in Jerash. Jerash Governor Ahmad Lawzi briefed the minister on the recent development in social activities there.

Cancer foundation meets

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Amal Cancer Foundation's Board of Trustees Sunday amended its internal regulations, and approved the legislative and finance committees. The board also appointed Abdullah Khatib as its rapporteur.

WHAT'S GOING ON

Special Programme

• Special CNN programme on honour crimes in Jordan at 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. (local time).

Films

• "Le Bossu" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh at 8:30 p.m.
• "Legends of the Fall" at Books@Café, Jabal Amman on Tuesday Jan. 12 at 8:30 p.m. (Tel. 4650457).

Poetry Recital

• Poetry recital with the participation of several poets at the City Hall, Greater Amman Municipality, Ras Al 'Ain at 7:30 p.m.

Lecture

• "The Nymphaeum" by Ms. Chan Tray at the Friends of Archaeology on Monday Jan. 11 at 7:30 p.m. (Telefax 5930682). (The lecture will discuss whether the Roman Nymphaeum was due to the existence of the water channels or was it just a gymnasium for the elite).

Exhibitions

• Exhibition of ceramics, sculpture, and abstract (plastic) art by Jordanian, Iraqi, Syrian, Lebanese, and Sudanese artists at Hammarabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until Jan. 25.

• Exhibition of Nabataean silver jewellery at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre, off Wadi Saqra Street, until Jan. 15 (Tel. 5699141/2).

• "The Warm Winter" — works by several artists at Orafah Art Gallery, Um Uthaina (Tel. 5526932), until Feb. 1.

• The Tenth Anniversary Exhibition of Contemporary Arab Artists at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh (Tel. 4643251/2, until Jan. 28.

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — The Jordan Pharmacists Association is scheduled to send a long overdue shipment of medicine to Iraq after the Eid Al Fitr. Abdul Rahim Issa, head of the association said Sunday.

The 13-member Council of Presidents of the Union of Professional Associations decided in a meeting held Saturday to send the shipment after obtaining a government approval, expected to be released before the Eid Al Fitr that will begin either next Sunday or Monday.

The association, whose members own 1,600 pharmacies and 12 drug factories, will be sending the shipment in defiance of U.N.-imposed economic sanctions on Iraq. It was scheduled to send the first shipment two weeks ago but the association was surprised by the government's delay in giving the go ahead.

In its trip, the association will offer a donation to help rebuild the Faculty of Pharmacy at Baghdad University which was destroyed by the American-led air strikes against the country last month.

Iraq is now refusing to accept humanitarian aid, and instead is demanding that eight-year-old economic sanctions be lifted.

The 100,000 member-strong professional associations will request that the Iraqi government exempt them from the decision and accept the donations. The influential professional associations are currently in contact with different Arab professional associations in the region to prepare for an Arab professional association conference.

The conference is expected to discuss the possibilities of collectively violating the sanctions that have devastated the Iraqi economy and created an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in that country, especially among children.

The conference venue is yet to be announced but Amman, Damascus, Cairo and Baghdad are all being

reviewed as potential hosts.

In an earlier interview with the Jordan Times, Issa said that the shipment of medical supplies had been held up for technical reasons.

The products to be exported to Iraq originally were designated for Jordanian markets, which requires that the association obtain a special permit from the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Interior to export it to Iraq," Issa said.

But an informed source at the Ministry of Industry and Trade said the ministry has not received any request from the association. The source added that sending medicine to Iraq is not considered a violation of the U.N. sanctions.

United Nations sanctions imposed on Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait ban it from importing or exporting most goods.

Humanitarian items such as food and medicine are allowed in, but every sale has to be approved by a U.N. sanctions monitoring committee.

The pharmacists association will not wait for approval from the United Nations, Issa said.

"If they will not allow us in, the trucks will turn back to Amman," said Issa.

Drug stores, pharmaceutical factories and medical equipment stores have responded positively to the campaign, said Issa. He could not disclose the exact amount to be sent to Iraq, but said they would be sold on the Iraqi market at lower than market prices.

The associations earlier last month began a boycott of American and British drugs, medical equipment and other goods to protest against the air strikes on Iraq from Dec. 16 to Dec. 19.

Some association members scoured the boycott decision and described it as impractical since the Jordanian market can not manage without the American and British products and that such a boycott was earlier launched but failed for the same reason.

Pharmacists expect government approval of Iraq-bound medicine before 'Eid Al Fitr

Nigeria takes step towards democracy with state elections

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) — After decades of military rule, Nigeria continued its tentative stride towards democracy with long lines of voters turning out to elect governors and state assemblies across the country.

Turnout appeared to be particularly high in the north and in Lagos, before voting ended in mid-afternoon. Results were expected later Sunday.

In a novel anti-fraud move, voters were allowed to stay at polling centres after they cast their ballots and watch votes being counted.

Military meddling and armed forces coups have long been part of Nigerian politics — the army has held power for all but 10 years since independence in 1960. But change has come to Africa's most populous nation since Gen. Sani Abacha's sudden death in June ended his brutal dictatorship.

Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, the career soldier

who succeeded Abacha, has freed political prisoners, opened up the political process and repeatedly vowed to hand over power to civilians later this year.

Nigeria, which became an international pariah under Abacha for its miserable human rights record, is again welcoming foreign envoys and wooing investors.

"We basically have one reason for voting, that is to get the military out of power," said Rahimi Sodunke, a Lagos businessman.

"We deserve a change in this country and we must shift power." Only three parties earned enough votes in local elections in December to qualify for the state polling, and for presidential voting next month.

The three parties are the Peoples' Democratic Party of former military ruler Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo; the All Peoples' Party, led by many supporters of late dictator

Abacha; and the Alliance for Democracy, mainly composed of opposition politicians from the Yoruba ethnic group from Nigeria's southwest.

Voting was held in 35 of Nigeria's 36 states. The elections did not take place in oil-rich Bayelsa state, which has been the scene of growing violence by members of the Ijaw tribe, who are demanding a bigger share of oil resources pumped from their poverty-stricken region.

Nigeria's electoral commission has said it would not conduct elections in that state because of fears of endangering its officials.

Despite the political shift since Abacha's death, Nigeria remains mired in poverty. The world's sixth-largest oil producer, the Nigerian economy has been crippled by years of mismanagement and corruption.

Landslides toll in Indonesia reaches 41

JAKARTA (AFP) — Landslides caused by heavy rains hit two more Indonesian towns Friday, killing seven people as the death toll in an earlier slide in the resort island of Bali rose to 34, reports and an official said Sunday.

In the West Java district of Garut, some 160 kilometres southeast of here, rescuers discovered six bodies trapped under the rubble from a rain-weakened cliff which toppled onto a main road late Friday, the Kompas daily said.

Two more people were believed to still be trapped, while three survivors were in critical condition, Kompas said. In East Java another slip in Jember, some 800 km

east of here, a woman was found dead after a mountain-side food stall was swept away. Four others were injured, Kompas added.

Meanwhile in Bali, rescue efforts to find the remaining six bodies believed to have been trapped under the landslide had again been temporarily halted due to the heavy rains.

"We cannot search for them because the rain is really heavy."

The Bali landslide occurred around 9:00 a.m. Thursday in the mountainous area of Tegalalang, 55 kilometres north of Denpasar, as villagers were working to clear an irrigation channel. Thursday police said they feared 50 had died in the slide.

people found is now 34. Sergeant Major Wayan Lastro of Tegalalang office told AFP by phone.

He added that the rescue search for the remaining six more bodies believed to have been trapped under the landslide had again been temporarily halted due to the heavy rains.

"We cannot search for them because the rain is really heavy."

The Bali landslide occurred around 9:00 a.m. Thursday in the mountainous area of Tegalalang, 55 kilometres north of Denpasar, as villagers were working to clear an irrigation channel. Thursday police said they feared 50 had died in the slide.

One man was found at 8:00 am (0100 GMT), and a woman was found at 10 a.m. ... so the total number of

1950s packaging shows changing consumer world

LONDON (R) — Stand beside the washing powders in a supermarket and you'd be forgiven for feeling baffled.

Is it powder, liquid or tablets you are after? What does your choice of brand say about you? Do you want your kids to have a gleaming white sports kit or are you someone who simply chuckles in the laundry and forgets it?

If the decision seems hard today, imagine what British housewives felt 50 years ago when the drab era of World War II rationing ended and American-style self-service stores and commercial TV burst across the Atlantic.

A new book shows how consumer culture took off here in the 1950s with a cornucopia of brightly packaged convenience products — from automatic washing machines to Tupperware and filter-tipped cigarettes.

"Happy faces in the home. Why? Because it all seemed to be easy, bright and clean," says advertising and packaging historian Robert Opie in "The 1950s Scrapbook".

Everyday objects in the book project the security, certainty and promise of an era when prime minister Harold MacMillan could say in 1957: "Most of our people have never had it so good".

Many brands Opie shows are part of the 1990s consumer landscape even if their roles in people's lives have changed.

"Oxo" soup cubes, given to British soldiers in World War I trenches,

"Force", one of the first breakfast cereals to offer a promotional toy with its Sunny Jim ragdoll, even "Plasticine" modelling clay, are top names today.

These brands have become so much part of our lives, they are almost becoming part of our family." Fridges were a luxury, owned by just 30 per cent of homes in the 1950s, so new supermarkets displayed dummy packs and moulded rubber meat. By contrast, goods in brightly designed tins and boxes leap off the shelf. Opie recalled.

"The 50s stand for the galvanisation of the American style, a new wave of attack-

ing the market, the mass enforcement of "money off" promotional ideas, in-store promotions and the vibrancy of packaging," he said.

Opie enthuses about 1950s washing powder packs which combined art with function — Tide "with a swirlly feeling which makes you feel it's going to work better" and Dreft "soft and bubbly suggesting it won't be harsh and abrasive".

Making packaging speak for a brand is a serious affair today for detergent maker Lever Brothers. The Unilever unit in 1996 reduced by a quarter the

number of packs it put onto supermarket fixtures, while it calculated shoppers spent an average of 13 seconds choosing a brand like Persil.

"We looked at the value the consumer attached to what we were offering through the brand, whether functional or emotional, and how we were communicating that on the packaging," said corporate and consumer affairs director Jim Ballington.

"We found we tried to put too many messages across," he said. Lever elevated to pride of place on the back of its Persil boxes a "consumer careline" which offers

cleaning advice.

Virginia Valentine, who analyses the cultural significance of communications, says Britain has attached greater meaning and virtue to brands in recent decades as traditional organised value systems of family and religion have waned.

"Culture abhors a vacuum and brands have rushed in to fill it," said Valentine.

"Branding is not a post-war phenomenon. In a way there wasn't anything else. In those days brands were the signifier of a manufactured object. They were not the kind of icons of all our belief systems that they are now."

"Persil today is the repository of all our cultural beliefs, not just about clothes and cleaning but the way we think about bringing up our children. There's an underlying notion — which brands have fostered — that if your kids don't have pristine clothes you'll be accosted by social services."

Shifts in cultural assumptions can also be seen in attitudes to sweets, she observed. "When sweets came off ration I can remember the way the shops were cleared in two hours, absolutely emptied." Britain ended wartime sugar restrictions in 1953.

But now "we don't think about chocolate as a reward, something you can only have after you've earned it. The whole chocaholic thing — egregious noshing, as opposed to a guilty secret — shows we've come to the end of the austerity paradigm."



If choosing a washing machine powder seems difficult in today's supermarkets, imagine what British housewives felt 50 years ago when the drab era of World War II rationing ended and American-style self-service stores and commercial TV burst across the Atlantic. Photo taken Jan. 8, 1999, as/HO/Pictures reproduced from 'The 1950s Scrapbook' published by New Cavendish Books, London (Reuters)

Cambodia hints at freedom for rights workers

PHNOM PENH (R) — Cambodia's Interior Ministry said Sunday it had asked a provincial court to speed up investigations into two detained human rights workers and to free them if there was no evidence.

"We don't want to keep them in jail," said interior ministry spokesman Khet Sopheap. "But it depends on the investigation of the investigating judge."

"This case has caused a lot of concern about human rights."

We have proposed to the court to investigate this as soon as possible. If it is found they were not involved they will be released."

Kim Sen and Meas Minear of local rights group Licadho were arrested on Dec. 21 in the southern port of Sihanoukville. Khet Sopheap and Nuon Chea visited the nearby beach and berated journalists for not allowing them to "rest".

Taiwanese firm.

They were charged with robbery and criminal damage but human rights groups said they were only carrying out their normal protest monitoring duties and called for their immediate and unconditional release.

The case has attracted international attention because of its sharp contrast with the friendly treatment the government accorded to Khet Sopheap and Nuon Chea, two defecting leaders of the Khmer Rouge, whose revolution in the 1970s killed an estimated 1.7 million Cambodians.

In an extraordinary juxtaposition over New Year, while the rights workers sat jailed and denied bail in Sihanoukville, Khet Sopheap and Nuon Chea visited the nearby beach and berated journalists for not allowing them to "rest".

The two Khmer Rouge leader were allowed last week to return to the protection of an area controlled by their ex-comrades and the rights workers left to face up to six months in jail before being brought to trial and a sentence of up to 10-years if convicted on both charges.

Saturday, Thomas Hammarberg, the head of the United Nations human rights office in Cambodia, said he had not been convinced that there was any evidence against the workers.

He said the case "gives a very sad signal about the respect of the authorities towards human rights work."

The two men have been declared prisoners of conscience by the London-based human rights group Amnesty International.

NEWS IN BRIEF

U.N.'s Annan decries beating of Kenyan ecologist

UNITED NATIONS (R) — U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan protested Saturday against the beating of a Kenyan environmentalist who is a member of his advisory board on disarmament. He said in a statement that he expected Kenyan authorities to take "appropriate action" against those responsible for attacking Wangari Maathai, who was beaten and whipped by private security guards during a demonstration Friday against the sale of forest land near Nairobi, the capital. "The secretary-general has learned with concern that Professor Wangari Maathai, a member of his advisory board on disarmament matters and coordinator of the Green Belt Movement, was hospitalised after being the subject of violence," a statement from his office said. Three opposition members of parliament and two German environmentalists were also among those roughed up at the Karura forest site, north of Nairobi, when 70 guards moved in armed with machetes, clubs, whips, bows and arrows. The protesters say senior government officials have allowed the illegal seizure of 80 hectares of public land for private development. Annan, in his statement, wished Maathai a speedy recovery and said he had "no doubt that the Kenya authorities will take appropriate action against the perpetrators of this attack on a leading national and international figure in the disarmament and environmental field." Environmentalists and national newspapers have taken up the case, calling it an example of official corruption. Trouble flared after Maathai and two members of parliament led a group of activists in an attempt to plant a tree outside a fenced-off section of the forest. The security guards beat and stoned demonstrators and smashed the windows of cars belonging to protesters and journalists. Police declined to comment.

Church of England may loosen state ties

LONDON (UPI) — The Sunday Times of London is reporting that senior clerics in the Church of England have held a secret meeting with leaders of other Christian churches to discuss removing its ties to the British state. The meeting, first reported Sunday, was held with the Archbishop of Canterbury's support on Nov. 30. Removing the church's ties to the state could eventually involve dropping the British monarch as its supreme governor and forging closer ties with other Protestant denominations. The Church of England was formed in 1533 when King Henry VIII split with the Roman Catholic Church because it refused to annul his first marriage. Since then, the British monarch has been the church's supreme governor. The church's bishops also have seats in parliament's House of Lords. The church's official position still holds that it will not abandon its historic role, but until now discussion of disestablishment floated only on the fringes. Disestablishment may become more attractive for the church in the wake of British Prime Minister Tony Blair's rejection of the church's nominees for the bishopric of Liverpool and his plans to reform the House of Lords. Blair's reform plan for the House of Lords could cause many bishops to lose their seats. Some clerics fear the church's established status could be a sticking point in its efforts to build closer ties with other Protestant denominations, especially Methodists, who oppose the state's influence in the church's affairs.

No prosecutions over Diana's death, says paper

LONDON (R) — An official investigation into the Paris car crash which killed Britain's Princess Diana and her companion Dodi Al Fayed has concluded that no one left alive is to blame, the Sunday Mirror said. The investigation, led by French judge Hervé Stephan, began soon after Diana's death in Sept. 1997 and was completed last week, the newspaper said. It said it had obtained key segments of the report despite the strict security that surrounded it. The Sunday Mirror said that according to those excerpts the only person who could have been held responsible — the car driver Henri Paul — was dead. "From the overall examination of the known factors the accident may be due to excess speed, the peculiar characteristics of the road, the presence of a Fiat Uno at the mouth of the tunnel and the poor control of the vehicle by the driver," the newspaper quoted the report as saying. The Paris investigators have consistently blamed the crash on the high speed at which Paul drove the car and the criminal level of alcohol in his blood at the time of the accident. The Sunday Mirror said manslaughter charges against photographers and a dispatch rider who pursued the car after it left the Ritz Hotel, owned by Dodi's father Mohamed Al Fayed, would be dropped. Photographers who were first to reach the crash scene would face only minor charges, the newspaper said, and the managers of the Ritz Hotel would not be tried for corporate manslaughter. The owners of the limousine hire company which provided the car would not face any charges for not providing a driver for the car when it was requested, the Sunday Mirror said. Only Diana's bodyguard, Trevor Rees-Jones, survived the crash, but he suffered severe injuries.

Suharto's old party starts offensive for Indonesian elections

JAKARTA (AFP) — Indonesia's ruling Golkar Party, for decades the main political vehicle of fallen president Suharto, has set up a 480-strong team to launch its bid for power in the June 7 elections. The team, selected for their "loyalty and consistency" was installed by Golkar general chairman Akbar Tanjung at the party headquarters on Saturday in anticipation of a "strong challenge" in the polls, the state Antara News Agency said Sunday. "God willing Golkar will be able to win the hearts of the majority of the people and emerge victorious," Tanjung told the meeting of the central executive board. After winning every election in Indonesia since 1971, with massive backing from the military and the civil service, the 36-million-member Golkar has been trying since Suharto's fall in May to disassociate itself from the excesses of his rule. In its first post-Suharto congress in November, Golkar removed Suharto from its board of patrons and booted his children and closest confidants off its board of directors. In June it will also face a far more open field, with some 15 out of the 120 parties that have mushroomed since May expected to qualify for seats promised by Suharto's hand-picked successor, President B.J. Habibie. Among its strongest challengers currently appear to be the Indonesian Democracy Party (PDI-Sumatra), Megawati Sukarnoputri, the politician daughter of the country's first president Sukarno. Also high in opinion polls are the National Awakening Party (PAN) headed by intellectual Amien Rais. The June 7 polls will result in the election of a new parliament, or lower house and the formation of a new People's Consultative Assembly, which would under Habibie's timetable select a new president before the end of 1999.

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World News

NATO marks 50th anniversary

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation begins to celebrate its 50th anniversary Monday, kicking off a series of events including a football match, a military fashion parade, and a summit of leaders of the member states.

The ceremonies will involve all of the countries in the alliance and most of the eastern and central European nations which are candidates to join or associated in the Partnership for Peace programme.

They will culminate in Washington on April 24 and 25, when heads of state and government gather in the same room where the North Atlantic Treaty was signed on April 4, 1949.

The aim of the alliance was to guard against a perceived threat from the Soviet Union and the other Communist-ruled countries under Moscow's domination.

That threat has now disappeared with the collapse of the Soviet system that began some ten years ago, and NATO is seeking a new role in international peacekeeping.

Monday NATO Secretary General Javier Solana and Belgian Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene are to meet at a printing works in Belgium to see commemorative postage stamps roll off the presses.

Other events during the year will include the publication of books in Denmark, Greece, Italy, Hungary and Albania, a military fashion parade and a cycle rally in Bulgaria, a concert in Canada, a music festival in the Czech Republic and a religious holiday in much of Europe, so NATO headquarters in Belgium will stage a military parade on April 8, keeping it relatively low key so as not to overshadow the summit.

Another parade in Washington will precede the opening of the summit, which will see the admission of first three eastern European members, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland.

The summit, which on its second day will be expanded to include 28 associated states, including the "old enemy" Russia, is expected to confirm the trend towards a "European identity" for NATO, which is still largely dominated by the United States.

Zinc important to brain function

LA JOLLA, Calif. (UPI) — Scientists have discovered why zinc is so important to proper brain function and why its deficiency appears linked to cognitive impairment.

The scientists report in *Nature Structural Biology* that zinc, long recognised as an essential trace element, is an integral part of structures called ion channels. These key "gatekeepers" regulate communication among nerve cells.

"We don't know yet what zinc is doing, but it is definitely a component in these essential structures," said senior study author Senyon Choe, assistant professor at The Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, California.

"This finding was so surprising that at first we tried to disregard it, thinking it must be a contaminant, but, of course, as you try to disprove it, it keeps coming back."

The ion channels regulate how such ions as calcium and potassium flow into and out of cells. Their flux is critical to vital neuronal processes. As calcium streams into brain cells, it triggers changes that accompany learning.

Abnormalities in potassium channels have been found in some epileptics and in patients with insulin resistance and mobility disorders, said co-researcher Paul Pflueger of Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

Using X-ray crystallography, the team analysed the structures of four potassium channels from the sea slug Aplysia. These channels — Shaw, Shab, Shal and Shaker — represent the four



Malaysia's newly appointed deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi kisses his mother Kaliyan Hassan's hand for blessings at his home in Penang, his home state. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad named Abdullah as his new deputy, replacing former deputy Anwar Ibrahim who has been charged with corruption and sexual allegations (AFP photo)

Marshalls atoll considered, then rejected, for N-testing

MAJURO (AFP) — A northern Marshall Islands atoll was considered but later rejected as a third nuclear test site during the 1950s, according to a recently declassified U.S. government report.

Uninhabited Taongi, known by Marshall Islanders as "Bokak", was under consideration as an alternative to Enewetak and Bikini atolls for the 1958 Hardtack nuclear test series, the final 32 U.S. tests in the Marshalls.

It is located nearly 800 kilometres north of here.

Taongi was in the spotlight in the late 1980s when researchers from the Hawaii-based East West Centre reported on its pristine and unusual marine habitat, with elevated reef structure found nowhere else in the Marshall Islands, and recommended it be placed on the World Heritage list.

At the same time an American company proposed using Taongi as a dump for municipal garbage shipped from the U.S. West Coast, a proposal that was later scrapped.

U.S. nuclear test planners in 1957 proposed that four of the biggest hydrogen bombs in the Hardtack series be tested at Taongi "in order to take advantage of presumably better firing weather there than at Bikini," according to the U.S. report, parts of which were deleted prior to its release here last week.

It is one of tens of thousands of documents that have been released over the last three years to the Marshall Islands by the U.S. Department of Energy.

Planning for the test series was complicated by the fact that U.S. planners were late in deciding about whether or not to use Taongi.

Washington decided on June 7, 1957, after months of consideration, that Taongi would not be used as a third test site.

The report showed that the use of two sites, with multiple monitoring capabilities at both test sites, allowed the operation to be "accomplished on a reasonable time scale."

U.S. test planners recommended that future series follow this two-atoll test pattern. "Although substitution of Taongi for Bikini should prove to be extremely advantageous due to the more favourable

weather situation at Taongi."

Taongi is much smaller in land area and lagoon space than both Bikini and Enewetak, which have huge enclosed lagoons of calm ocean area that provided anchorage for dozens of navy vessels used in monitoring the weapons tests.

In contrast, Taongi's lagoon is less than eight kilometres across at its widest point and less than 15 kilometres long.

The U.S. report includes numerous words, most apparently relating to the size of the nuclear tests, that are blacked out by a magic marker and also marked "deleted."

Other previously released U.S. documents provide the exact size of each of the 67 U.S. nuclear tests in the Marshall Islands.

The report noted that all tests in the Hardtack series at Enewetak Atoll should be limited to a maximum of five megatonnes in size, but the Oak test on June 28, 1958, was recorded at 8.9 megatonnes.

Don't make me a princess like Diana, says royal fiancée

LONDON (AFP) — Royal fiance Sophie Rhys-Jones, who marries Prince Edward later this year, has told the queen she does not want to be a princess because of comparisons with Diana.

According to Sunday's British press, Rhys-Jones resents media comparisons of her strong resemblance to the late princess and wants to be recognised in her own right.

The Sunday Telegraph said she had told Queen Elizabeth she did not want to become a princess when she marries the monarch's youngest son.

Nor does she want to be known as Her Royal Highness The Princess Edward, which would be her official title, believing it is old-fashioned to be known by her husband's name.

The solution would be for the queen to make Edward a duke — royal experts say the Dukedom of Cambridge is the most likely.

Edward, 34, and Rhys-Jones, 33, announced their engagement

the eve of his marriage to Sarah Ferguson in 1986.

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Mahathir revamps cabinet, asserts control

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP)

— Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad has moved swiftly to reassess control with a cabinet revamp which put loyalists in key posts and filled a political vacuum, politicians and diplomats said.

Mahathir, under pressure to name a deputy and relinquish the home ministry, named Foreign Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, 59, to both positions in a weekend reshuffle that caught the country by surprise.

The opposition had demanded that Mahathir give up the powerful home ministry, which controls the country's internal security apparatus, after an official finding implicated police in the beating of his detained former deputy Anwar Ibrahim.

A power gap also emerged in the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) after the September firing of Anwar, who headed a large faction in the party which dominates the ruling National Front coalition.

Party officials said UMNO members fell in line behind Mahathir's choice of deputy, easing worries over succession if something happens to him. Mahathir, 73, has been in power since 1981 and has had a heart bypass.

"He is responding to pressure within his own party, it seems," a Southeast Asian diplomat told AFP. "Having no deputy is not reassuring, whether internally or to the outside world."

Another Asian diplomat said the reshuffle was "a way of sharing around the responsibility and blame."

"It was well-coordinated, he defused the situation a little," he said, adding that "there is now a clear line of succession, the immediate issue has been addressed."

However, one Western diplomat described the reshuffle as "a sign of weakness."

The fact that Mahathir gave up the home ministry was an implicit confession that he was responsible (for Anwar's beating), he said. "He has just surrounded himself with yes-men."

Syed Husin Ali, president of the tiny opposition group Malaysian People's Party, said the reshuffle allowed Mahathir to retain control while deflecting criticism.

He said that "appearances may deceive, but in reality the PM will continue to dominate the cabinet and the country in his own authoritarian ways."

But not all opposition groups have written off Abdullah, who is known in Malaysia's rough political arena as a clean politician and a nice guy.

Lim Kit Siang, secretary-general of the Democratic Action Party, urged Abdullah to get Mahathir's backing for the establishment of an independent commission to look into Anwar's maltreatment under police custody.

He also urged Abdullah to create a home ministry "with a human face."

Canadian executive hostage freed by leftist guerrillas

BOGOTA (AFP)

— The chief executive of a Canadian company who offered himself in exchange for an employee abducted by Colombian rebels was freed Saturday after three months as a hostage, authorities reported here.

On Oct. 6 Norbert Reinhart, 49, president of Ontario-based Grey Star Resources, voluntarily took the place of his employee Ed Leonard — who Reinhart had never met — who had been abducted in late June by Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) rebels while Greystar and another outfit, Ternando Drilling, drilled for oil in the Bucaramanga region.

"I feel wonderful. I feel like I've been reborn," said Reinhart in Bucaramanga in a telephone interview with a Canadian reporter. He said his captors treated him respectfully.

The ministry refused to reveal the conditions under which Reinhart was freed or comment on whether the 500,000-Canadian dollar (\$330,000) ransom demanded by the rebels was paid.

"The only thing I can say is that the negotiations were very long and complex. Normally in Colombia, it takes a year," Leblanc said.

The ministry refused to reveal the conditions under which Reinhart was freed or comment on whether the 500,000-Canadian dollar (\$330,000) ransom demanded by the rebels was paid.

Meanwhile, Colombian government negotiators and FARC rebels were holding a first round of talks Saturday in the town of San Vicente del Caguán in a bid to end decades of violence.

Reinhart was handed over to the Red Cross while waiting for his return home to be arranged by authorities in the next few days.

Would-be hostage Leonard said the executive called him early Saturday with the news. "It was the best wake-up call I have ever had," he said.

Another hostage, the German physician Otar Broda, 60, was also set free by rebels thanks to efforts by the German foreign ministry and the Roman Catholic bishop of Santo Domingo de los Colorados, Ecuador.

A spokesman for Broda's abductors from another rebel group, the National Liberation Army (ELN), said the physician was freed "in the context of an agreement we have with Germans citizens."

The government's anti-kidnapping "tsar", Jose Alfredo Escobar said seven other foreigners remain in the hands of rebel groups.

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Initiative worth supporting

DESPITE THE fact that the seven points French President Jacques Chirac recently proposed as a basis for the new international order are a faithful reflection of the existing principles of the U.N. Charter, their reaffirmation now is a timely and positive step. The repudiation of established international norms and practices by small and mighty nations must have been behind Chirac's timely reminder that the new international order must not continue to be defined by one superpower, the U.S.

The flouting of the U.N. Charter and other international laws by one nation or another should no longer characterise the global order. The recent decision of Washington and London to strike at Iraq without U.N. permission must have been on the mind of the French president when he spoke up against the tyranny of power. This also explains why Paris is speaking more forcefully than ever against unilateral actions, especially those taken by major powers and why this issue is being placed at the top of the seven-point French list.

The struggle against the application of double standards in dealing with different nations must also become part and parcel of the proposed order. That order should also ensure that peoples should not be punished for the wrongdoings of their leaders especially in countries where democracy is lacking. Economic sanctions, we must have realised by now, are anathema to human rights and humanitarian law.

The abolition of weapons of mass destruction must become a global objective. Biological and chemical weapons are just as dreadful and indiscriminate as nuclear weapons and must be not only be outlawed. Most conventions against mass destruction arsenals remain without an iron-clad system of inspection and verification, and this flaw requires immediate rectification.

France has made a good beginning that calls for additional support. As Paris intends to submit its ideas to the U.N. General Assembly for consideration, other member states should submit their own proposals in order to make the French initiative stronger and complete.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Raja Elissa quoted U.S. officials as saying that the recent allied attack against Iraq caused the death of around 1600 people, and destroyed several sensitive areas eliminating the country's ability to produce any kinds of weapons of mass destruction. According to Elissa, these areas were disclosed by UNSCOM's spies, who submitted their reports to the U.S. instead of the U.N. Why is the U.S. determined to continue inspections if the strikes have paralysed Iraq's capabilities to manufacture such weapons, asked the writer. Both the U.S. and U.K. clearly said their most important objectives are destroying President Saddam Hussein's regime, controlling the region's oil and satisfying Israel, Elissa claimed.

Al Dustour's Oraib Rintawi said Jordan is concerned about internal and public opinion changes in Israel because Israelis, unlike most populations of the countries in the region, form Israeli policies. Whether the Arabs like it or not, Israel has a "presence" in the region, especially in Jordanian, Palestinian, Lebanese, Syrian and Egyptian issues, Rintawi added. After the Arab-Israeli struggle became "negotiable and peaceful," it is natural to be concerned about Israeli public opinion. According to the writer, Jordan has a greater effect on that public opinion than the Palestinian National Authority because of the Kingdom's diplomacy in dealing with different Israeli figures for long time. However, Rintawi said, Jordanian diplomatic efforts have been subdued because of the upcoming elections in Israel, because Jordan does not want to interfere in internal issues. Despite all that has happened, the Kingdom should continue to keep a close eye on Israeli politics and any new figures the elections might throw up, the writer said.

Economic review

Dr. Yusuf Mansur

The use of currency boards in Jordan

NET CAPITAL flows to developing countries have tripled from \$50 billion per year in 1987-89 to more than \$150 billion in 1995-97 before declining in the aftermath of the Asian crisis. With the removal of restrictions on capital flows, the issue of exchange rate becomes of vital interest, especially in small economies.

Recently, there has been a recurrence of articles in the media about currency boards. What are they? A currency board arrangement is a new yet old idea (there were currency boards in 38 countries in the 1960s, which went down to 9 in the '80s and back up to 14 last year), which can provide an added element of stability to the currency: the assurance of a long-term institutional commitment to the fixed rate.

A currency board arrangement

is comprised of three basic elements: a fixed exchange rate to a peg currency (such as the dinar/dollar exchange rate peg), automatic convertibility (i.e., convertibility whenever desired), and long-term commitment to the arrangement (usually done through a legislative change in the law of the central bank).

Demand for a currency that is subject to currency board arrangement is higher than that for currencies without such guarantees and helps create a virtuous cycle as the credibility for the currency board currency (for example the dinar) becomes similar to that of the anchor currency (the U.S. dollar). The long-term trust (confidence effect) established by these guarantees and arising from the growth in money demand leads to lower interest rates and thus increases the pos-

sibility for higher growth rates and increased net foreign investments to the country which are usual prompted by the long-term stability of the exchange rate. In addition, having a currency board reduces the risk of capital flight at times of trouble — to date, no currency board has had to be abandoned due to a crisis.

Recent empirical evidence confirms that currency boards do better in small countries than all other fixed exchange rate regimes. Jordan is already implementing two of the three components of a currency board arrangement: the third — the long-run institutional commitment — adds the very useful assurance of long-term commitment to the peg, a very valuable assurance indeed that helps deepen the financial market and sustains the long-run demand for the

dinar. However, (going strictly by the bylaw or regulation will not give investors the correct signal of long-term stability); and finally the relationship between the central bank and the government has to be redefined with transparency to reflect the necessities of the arrangement.

Overall, a currency board may be a Jordanian option that is worth looking into in the future. It, more than any other monetary tool, ensures long-term stability for the exchange rate and douses the flames of rumours. However, if it is ever to become a reality, it would require careful planning and implementation (never attempt this recipe during a financial crisis), consensus building (like all good policies), and the rehabilitation of weak banks.



May 4: Check, mate and bye, bye Bibi

By John V. Whitehead

BENYAMIN NETANYAHU presumably believes that he has checkmated Yasser Arafat by scheduling Israel's elections for May 17 and June 1, soon after the May 4 date on which the "Oslo process" terminates in accordance with the terms of its various agreements and on which President Arafat has repeatedly promised (or "threatened") to use the term adopted by the American and Israeli press to proclaim the establishment of the state of Palestine on the soil of Palestine.

While reading Mr. Netanyahu's mind is scarcely an exact science, he does appear to believe that he has cleverly trapped President Arafat in a situation in which he is damned if he does and damned if he doesn't. If he does "proclaim" the state on May 4 (or, more precisely, reaffirms its existence, since it was already proclaimed on November 15, 1988 — and promptly recognised by over 100 other states), Mr. Netanyahu promises (or threatens) to "annex" most of the West Bank (all of "Area C" and perhaps "Area B" as well) and to send in the army to blockade the small pockets of land under Palestinian control and bring them to their knees.

At the Security Council level, China and Russia already recognise the state of Palestine. In December 1998, the French Foreign Ministry organised a two-day symposium in Paris on "The Issue of the Palestinian State" at which French support for Palestinian statehood, on both legal and policy grounds, was made clear to all the Arabs, Israelis, Europeans and Americans invited to attend and a French diplomat cited the figure 140 for the number of states which currently recognise the state of Palestine. It is difficult to believe that the United Kingdom, having consistently supported Palestinian self-determination in international organisations, will veto U.N. membership for Palestine (Notwithstanding British inclination to follow the United States blindly, if the U.S. chose to veto, a British veto would be unnecessary, while if the U.S. chose not to veto, a British veto would be inconceivable).

In fact, on May 4, President Arafat will face a difficult choice: making May 4 an even more desirable date on which to reaffirm the existence of the state of Palestine on the soil of Palestine and ensuring that Palestinian statehood will be established in the most favourable circumstances imaginable.

Imagine that on May 4, President Arafat were to publicly confirm that the state of Palestine has been legally sovereign in all the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem, since the state was proclaimed in 1988 and that the "Palestinian [National] Authority" through which the state established its presence and authority on a portion of its national territory has ceased to exist with the termination of the "Oslo process" and were then to publicly declare that all Palestinian governmental institutions established on Palestinian territory as organs of the "Palestinian [National] Authority" are now governmental institutions of the state of Palestine and that the state of Palestine is appealing for diplomatic recognition from all states which have not already recognised it and applying to further upgrade Palestine's status at the United Nations from "permanent observer" status in which "Palestine" replaced the PLO in December 1988, one month after Palestine's declaration of independence, and which was upgraded to an effective "super-observer" or "quasi-state" status in July 1988 to full member state.

Imagine further that, at the same time, President Arafat were to confirm his eagerness and that of the state of Palestine to negotiate with the new Israeli

government soon to be elected, on an accelerated basis, all outstanding permanent status issues (including final boundary demarcations and an equitable sharing of an undivided Jerusalem) with a view to achieving a new relationship between the two states and peoples based on peaceful coexistence, mutual respect and human dignity so as to finally provide both peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians in the land both peoples longer than they are legally obligated to do so.

If notwithstanding Mr. Netanyahu's contemptuous trashing of the Wye River accords to which President Clinton and his associates devoted so much personal time and effort, the United States were to veto Palestinian membership in the U.N., then Mr. Netanyahu could present himself to his electorate as "the world's sole superpower," to whom even the United States must kneel in military submission. If, on the other hand, after Mr. Netanyahu had made opposition to Palestinian statehood the first plank in his electoral platform, the United States were to permit Palestine's admission to the U.N. as a member state, while virtually all other states (including those of the European Union) were extending full diplomatic recognition to Palestine, Mr. Netanyahu would be made to look ridiculous and anachronistic. He would be finished. If the United States made such a decision prior to the first round of the Israeli elections, it is unlikely that, in the expected multi-candidate field, Mr. Netanyahu would even qualify for the June 1 second-round run-off.

In the context of the American decision-making process, it is extremely fortunate that there will be an unusually long 18 months between this year's Israeli elections and next year's American elections. This should be perceived as diminishing the personal "political costs" of a pro-Palestinian decision. Given an opportunity to ensure Mr. Netanyahu's replacement by a more Rabin-like figure, it is most unlikely that the United States will forsake the chance and choose instead to put American citizens and embassies throughout the world at risk of an explosion of Arab and Muslim frustration and rage.

What could Mr. Netanyahu do? It is far from certain, particularly after Shimon Peres' repeated declaration that a Palestinian state is in Israel's own national interest, that he could find a Knesset majority to support "annexing" Palestinian lands in the waning days of a campaign in which he was in deep political trouble. It is also far from certain that Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai (or his successor) would order the army to invade the West Bank for reasons which transparently relate more to electoral manoeuvring than to national security — or that, if given, such orders would be followed. Furthermore, even if Mr. Netanyahu could carry out either or both of these threats, it is most unlikely, with polls repeatedly showing a majority of Israelis ready to accept a Palestinian state, that such provocative behaviour would help, rather than harm, his electoral fortunes. They would, however, be certain to outrage international opinion and strengthen sympathy and support for Palestine. Mr. Netanyahu would be damned if he does and damned if he doesn't.

If President Arafat can keep his nerve and keep his promise, May 1999 will bring checkmate and early retirement for Benjamin Netanyahu and a giant step forward towards peace with some measure of justice and a better life for Israelis, Palestinians and all the peoples of the Middle East.

The writer is a Paris-based international lawyer who writes frequently on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

LETTERS

Why amnesty?

To the editor:

THERE IS a rumour circulating within the legal community that an amnesty is expected on the occasion of HM King Hussein's return to Jordan.

An amnesty differentiates between citizens of a society by making some more equal than others, and thus is counter to the basic notion of justice, i.e. "Citizens are equal before the law and are all entitled to equal protection by the law." Therefore, by granting an individual a pardon for a crime, amnesty is denying the legal rights of another individual.

I write from personal experience, having returned to Jordan after a very long absence. In 1993, I was shot at and my home was robbed by a convict incarcerated for attempted murder. He was released from prison by the 1992 amnesty. Is he too to be given another chance? He may be third time lucky and murder an innocent person?

Since 1993, I have put my trust in the Jordanian law by initiating a number of court cases against my partner who was charged by the public prosecutors for false accounting and other criminal charges.

No one should be above the law. However, only people of ill-intent appear to benefit from an amnesty, whilst the innocent individual's rights seems to be sacrificed. Citizens will lose faith in the justice system if the guilty are not held to account for their actions, because equally, to an individual's legal right "justice should be done" and must be seen to be done.

Amnesty is divisive, unjust to the innocent, harmful to the future of this society, and does disservice to its architects.

Ziad Isma'il Bilbeisi
Ismail Bilbeisi and Co.
Amman

The way it is

To the editor:

I AM AN American expatriate who has lived in the Middle East for a number of years. For some reason, Denis Englehardt's letter to the editor ("My enemy's enemy," JI, January 6) upset me. Even though he is a postgraduate of political and Islamic studies, I feel that somehow he has missed the point in his evaluation of Arab and Islamic reaction to "Desert Fox."

What should be the issue here is not how bad or good a leader Saddam Hussein is. The world is full of ruthless and cruel dictators many of whom have been responsible for killing thousands of their own people. Yet we do not see our noble "good guy" Americans try to crush their regimes, destroy their cities and bomb their babies. If you want to speak about justice and the true concerns of the American government, you only have to look at the state of Israel which owes its very existence to the continued and unwavering support of America. Palestinians are killed in the streets every day for throwing stones against heavily armed Israeli patrols. Every day new Jewish settlements pop up and every day more Palestinian land is confiscated. And what about the Palestinian homes that are bulldozed to dust and their occupants turned out in the cold? Yet we do not see American planes bombing Netanya do we? Nor do we question the huge stock of chemical and biological weapons that Israel holds, let alone its nuclear capabilities. Talk about double standards! America is not in the Gulf to protect Saddam's neighbours from him. America is in the Gulf to protect their own and Israel's interests. America does not really want to get rid of Saddam, they could have done this long ago. They want him to remain in power so they have an excuse to keep their forces in the Gulf. May I remind you that it was America who supplied Iraq and Iran with weapons so they could conveniently kill each other during the Iraq-Iran war. There is no justice here.

Also, I suggest you look deeply into American history and you might be shocked to know that a great proportion of Indians was massacred by those just and valiant early Americans. Whole tribes were slaughtered and as for biological weapons, Americans weaved smallpox germs into blankets and then so graciously and generously donated them to Indians as a goodwill gesture knowing that the Indians had no resistance to this "white man's" disease. And then look at how Americans bought and sold Africans as slaves and how hardly their human rights were abused.

I think the Iraqi people have suffered enough and been punished enough. Justice can only be served if the Americans leave them alone and lift the sanctions.

Furthermore, it is not that people in the Middle East are incapable of understanding or unaware of the misdeeds of Saddam Hussein. But two wrongs do not make a right. And America has no right to continually wage mass genocide on the Iraqi people. And in my own opinion, since when has America really stood on the side of justice anyway?

If President Arafat can keep his nerve and keep his promise, May 1999 will bring checkmate and early retirement for Benjamin Netanyahu and a giant step forward towards peace with some measure of justice and a better life for Israelis, Palestinians and all the peoples of the Middle East.

Science

By M.

BRITISH SCIENTISTS have won the Nobel Prize in Physics for their work on the discovery of the Higgs boson. The scientists, Peter Higgs and François Englert, have been awarded the prize for their work on the theory of the Higgs boson, which is a fundamental particle that gives mass to other particles. The discovery of the Higgs boson is considered to be one of the greatest scientific achievements of the century. The discovery of the Higgs boson has opened up new avenues of research in particle physics and has led to the development of new technologies in fields such as medicine and materials science. The discovery of the Higgs boson has also provided a better understanding of the fundamental laws of nature and has helped to advance our knowledge of the universe.

Features

Jordan Times, Monday, January 11, 1999

Anchoring the Madaba Plains Project, Tell el-'Umayri includes substantial remains of several Iron Age fortified towns — part II

(Note: This is the second of three articles on the excavations at Tell el-'Umayri and associated surveys and smaller excavations within the context of the Madaba Plains Project. This article concentrates on the important Iron Age towns at the site; the first article focused on the earliest Bronze Age towns; the third article looks at the Classical period and later sites, and the results of regional surveys and excavations.)

AS IF ITS three different Bronze Age settlements were not enough to put Tell el-'Umayri on the world archaeological map, the site also contains what may be Jordan and Palestine's best preserved urban remains from the Iron Age I (1200-900 BC).

The walls of several houses excavated in the past 14 years still stand two metres high; pillar bases supported wooden posts that held up the house roofs, while the floor was partially paved and surfaced with beaten earth. Other parts were paved with flagstones. The floor plan of these buildings mirrors the well-documented "four-room houses" from Iron I Palestine hill settlements.

A household cultic centre comprised a standing stone on pavement, some sort of altar, and post bases to support a curtain wall between the cultic installation and a domestic room. Inside that room were a storage bin, a cooking hearth, a grinding stone and mortar, and a small bench.

The Iron Age I town (from the time of the biblical Judges, around 1200-1000 BC) was re-formed and protected by a thick town wall standing over four metres high, some of whose stones measured a metre wide and two metres long. The Iron Age I fortifications basically built upon and expanded the previous defences from the Middle and Late Bronze Age towns. Over 35 metres of the Iron Age I wall have been exposed.

At the top of the fortifications was a double ('proto'-casemate) wall that may have surrounded the entire city. Below it, successively, were a steep rampart made of beaten earth, a lower second wall ('a retaining wall'), around the base of the site, and the dry moat measuring five metres deep and eight metres wide. These elements can be seen clearly in the major excavation on the west side of the tell.

Or, Amorites connected with the kingdom of King Shishak may have been the first town dwellers here, Dr. Herr said, adding that the walled town could have been destroyed in the early 12th century BC by Ammonites, Israelites, Midianites, or even Egyptians.

It is now well documented that the Iron Age I town was destroyed around 1150 BC or somewhat earlier by a violent conflagration that left behind debris of burned bricks and roofing materials such as wooden beams and reeds. One room was filled with almost two metres of pure ashes. The remains of huge amounts of stored foodstuffs amidst the collapsed roof debris suggest that food was stored on or in the roofing system. The presence of so much stored food also may mean that the town was not destroyed after a long siege, but rather suddenly and very violently. A military attack seems to be the most likely cause of the destruction, to judge by the many bronze weapons found in the debris.

In the century after this destruction, the site again supported a relatively small settlement. Excavated houses from around 1000 BC had 18 large jars that included grape and olive seeds, but the extent of that settlement has not yet been determined. The team excavating the site is exploring the hypothesis that after the violent destruction of their walled town in the early 12th century BC, the surviving inhabitants or their descendants moved three kilometres to the east, where they established a walled town on the more easily defensible site now known as Tell Jawa (just north-east of Yadoudeh/Kan Zaman).

Suggested identification

Some scholars tend to identify the Iron Age I town at Tell el-'Umayri with the Old Testament biblical town of Abel-keramim, mentioned in Judges 11:33.

This town is also mentioned in a list of cities subdued by the Egyptian Pharaoh Thutmose III (1504-1450 BC). In 1987 the excavators found (on a jar handle) a scarab-seal impression with an upright cartouche containing Thutmose's name (though the seal impression probably dated from the time of Ramses IV around the middle of the 12th century BC). The cartouche is flanked by a



The excavated dolmen from the Early Bronze Age settlement at Tell el-'Umayri (Photo by Rami G. Khouri)

winged ureus and the words "the Good God, the Lord of the Two Lands." (Abel-keramim, also called Abel-cheramim ["district/plain of the vineyards"], was the place where the Bible says that Jephthah the Gileadite defeated the Ammonites [Judges 11:33]. Jephthah was a mighty warrior who may have lived in the Jordan Valley, possibly at the site of Zaphon [associated today with Tell el-Qasr or Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh, in the central Jordan River Valley]. Some biblical translations say Jephthah was buried "in his city, Zaphon," "in his city in Gilead," or "among the cities of Gilead." Jephthah the Gileadite fled to Tob when his half-brothers refused him an inheritance because his mother was a prostitute, and the Ammonites hired soldiers from Tob to fight against David [Judges 11:1-5; 2 Samuel 10:6-8]. Tob [or, the Land of Tob] comprises a town and its area east of the Jordan River, between Gilead and the eastern desert. In Tob Jephthah was joined by "worthless fellows" and brigands who "went raiding with him"; but when the Ammonites and Israelites were at war in the mid-11th century BC, the elders of Gilead asked him to be their leader, and he became a major judge of the people of Israel. To keep a vow he had made to God in return for God's granting him victory in battle over the Ammonites, Jephthah had to sacrifice his daughter and only child upon returning home to Mizpah.)

Dr. Randall Younker of Andrews University has suggested that Abel-keramim might be better identified with nearby Tell Jawa, based on topographic and climatic evidence combined with information from the 4th century AD historian Eusebius and the mid-1st Millennium BC itinerary of the Egyptian leader Thutmose III. Wadi Henu north

of Jawa is well suited for a wine industry, as evidenced by the large number of wine presses the team found in that area. He believes that a major ancient road ran into Ammon, past Jawa, just as it does today, rather than following the route of the air-port highway near 'Umayri.

During the second half of the Iron Age (around 900-550 BC), the Ammon region usually found itself living under Assyrian tutelage, a period of Pax Assyriaca that brought with it stability for many centuries. This allowed people to expand beyond their large fortified towns and to move out and live in numerous rural villages and large farmsteads.

The Transjordanian provinces that included Ammon appear to have flourished under Assyrian rule, and also under the succeeding Babylonian rule starting in the early 6th century BC. The Ammonite inhabitants of the 'Umayri region enjoyed an affluent lifestyle based on agriculture and trade well into the 5th century BC, the excavations reveal. The most substantial evidence for the continuity of the Ammonites at this town into the Babylonian and Persian periods comes from the excavated Late Iron Age administrative complex towards the south-west side of the summit.

Dr. Herr explained that "the Ammonites apparently controlled the city at Tell el-'Umayri in the later Iron Age, making it an administrative centre near their southern border with the Moabites."

Seals and impressions

Ten new seals and seal impressions were discovered in this year's dig (1998), mostly associated with bureaucratic activities at the late Iron Age administrative complex. No other Iron Age site in Jordan or Palestine has approached the more than 80 seals and seal impressions discovered to date at Tell el-'Umayri.

One seal impression found in 1984 mentions a prominent official of the Ammonite government who served King Baalis in the time of the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 40:14). Dated from the early 6th century BC, it reads: "belonging to Milkoni'ur, servant of Baalyasha."

The name

Baalyasha ('Baal saves') is the Ammonite spelling of the biblical King Baalis. This is another interesting piece of material evidence that can be compared with the biblical text.

When the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar attacked Judah in 588 BC, the Bible reports, some Jews fled for safety to Ammon and the other Transjordanian kingdoms of Moab and Edom to the south. According to Jeremiah 40:11, "...when all the Jews who were in Moab and among the Ammonites and in Edom and in other lands heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah as governor of Judah they all returned to Judah. Around 582 BC, the Ammonite King Baalis ordered Ishmael, a renegade prince of Judah, to assassinate Gedaliah, after which Ishmael fled to Ammon to escape from Johanan who had gone to kill him (Jeremiah 40:14-15)."

The official who made the seal impression "belonging to Milkoni'ur, servant of Baalyasha" probably worked in an administrative centre within the walled town — most likely the complex that has been identified and excavated along the west side of the summit. This large complex dating from about 550 BC was built of massive stone walls measuring over a metre thick and resting on deep foundations — a typical ancient Ammonite monarchy architecture.

Our Ancient Heritage A Jordan Times Series



By Rami G. Khouri

Babylon or other destinations. This hypothesis, if correct, would explain why so many wine-making farmsteads were suddenly built during one period, all in a monumental architectural style that probably reflected Ammonite royal patronage under Babylonian imperial tutelage or vassalage.

The available evidence to date suggests that the buildings of the Iron II administrative complex were built around 580-560 BC, and were used well into the Persian period (539-332 BC). Among the important findings were Aramaic seal impressions with the names of an official ('Shubi') and the name of the province of Ammon — the first material proof for the existence of a Persian province of Ammon. Shuba was probably a governor or treasurer of the Persian province of Ammon, Dr. Herr says.

Other, earlier, seal impressions from



A general view of the excavation of the Bronze and Iron Age settlements at Tell el-'Umayri (Photo by Rami G. Khouri)

the 7th-6th centuries BC had inscriptions such as "belonging to Shema", "belonging to 'El amus son of Tamak'el", and "belonging to Nasur'il son of 'Imashal'."

Dr. Herr says the evidence from Tell el-'Umayri now indicates that "the Ammonites did not disappear with the Babylonian invasion, but instead flourished in the Persian period, perhaps as late as the Fourth century BC."

A fragmentary but unique find in Jordan from the Iron II administrative complex at Tell el-'Umayri were small pieces of a ceramic life-sized statue, with dramatic bits of a painted eye, an ear, a chin with a thin mouth, parts of arms, two heels, and chest and shoulder fragments. They were excavated from ancient debris that was moved from other parts of the site. The original configuration of the statue remains unclear.

Other buildings excavated in this south-western corner of the summit included a small farmstead from the Persian and Hellenistic periods, a two-metre-high, plastered Roman era ritual bath from the 1st century AD, and a 6th century AD Byzantine farm. The region around 'Umayri was intensively settled during the Byzantine period (c. 330-640 AD), and remained in use, though less densely, until the Islamic era.

Large towns once again flourished in the region during the Ayyubid-Mamluk era (1174-1516 AD), though not at this site.



Part of the 'glacis' defensive system from the Iron Age settlement (the stairs at right of photo are modern; the original sloping fortification is at centre-right of photo) (Photo by Rami G. Khouri)

Ten new seals and seal impressions were discovered in this year's dig (1998), mostly associated with bureaucratic activities at the late Iron Age administrative complex. No other Iron Age site in Jordan or Palestine has approached the more than 80 seals and seal impressions discovered to date at Tell el-'Umayri.

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The name



Scientists claim to be homing in on a cancer-killing gene

By Maggie Fox

Reuters

BRITISH SCIENTISTS said last Wednesday they were homing in on a gene that can make cancer cells naturally self-destruct.

Breast cancer cells exposed to a chromosome that carries the gene nearly all died, the scientists reported in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute.

Although the experiment does not offer a cure or therapy, it does show that gene therapy or drugs that target an enzyme known as telomerase might work against cancer, said Robert Newbold of Brunel University in Uxbridge, who helped lead the study.

Telomerase has become a recent target of cancer researchers because it seems to confer immortality on cells. Newbold says his

group's findings show that such researchers are on the right track.

Chromosomes carry the genes, and at the end of each chromosome is a section called the telomere. Each time a cell divides, the telomere gets more and more ragged. This contributes to the genetic damage that in turn causes cells to age and die.

In a foetus, which naturally has many dividing cells, cells produce an enzyme known as telomerase, which helps repair these telomeres. But telomerase is no longer produced in a fully developed animal.

However, recent studies have found that most cancer cells produce telomerase, which helps them continue their out-of-control division that produces a tumour.

"Cancer cells are immortal," Newbold said. "It is one of the fundamental differ-

ences between cancer cells and normal cells."

Newbold and colleagues tested a lab dish full of breast cancer cells. They shot these cells full of human chromosomes — notably those known as 3, 8, 12 and 20 — from normal cells.

Most had no effect. But the cancer cells treated with chromosome 3 nearly all stopped dividing.

Newbold said the implication was clear. "The gene on chromosome 3 is the natural regulator of telomerase which shuts it down in our normal cells at about 20 weeks of foetal development," he said. "Eighty-five to 90 percent of cancers have high levels of this enzyme." So if there is a way to shut down the enzyme, it could be a good

way to battle most cancers.

There is no known way to treat a person using entire chromosomes, but Newbold's team hopes to identify the actual gene later this year. They would then use gene therapy against the cancer — introducing the gene into the body, perhaps using a virus to carry it.

Another approach would be what some drug companies are already working on —

designing a drug that inhibits telomerase.

Newbold is aware that no gene therapy efforts have been completely successful, except for early experiments to grow new blood vessels in heart patients.

"We do have a long way to go," he said. "Cancer is extremely complex." But once discoveries in test tubes are developed into true therapies, progress will be quick, Newbold predicted.

"The public are getting a little bit impatient — they are seeing all these discoveries coming out and no major benefits at the bedside. But we have got to be patient. It's not like attacking bacteria. These are our own cells that have gone awry."

8 Economy

New business body chief warns on protectionism

GENEVA (R) — The new President of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the world's top business grouping, has warned that protectionism is one of the biggest dangers to the world economy in 1999.

In a message on taking over the post, Lebanese banker Adnan Kassar also urged governments to resist pressures sparked by economic problems to close national markets to foreign goods and services.

"The lesson of history is that such tendencies must not only be resisted but that, when they appear, governments should strive with renewed vigour to open markets and further strengthen the rules-based multilateral trading system," he said.

The message from Kassar, whose grouping is based in Paris, was distributed in Geneva where the World Trade Organisation which administers global trading rules has its headquarters.

Kassar, chairman and

chief executive officer of the Fransbank Group, said liberalisation of trade and investment was "the surest way to secure economic growth, more jobs and prosperity for all nations."

Further progress in opening up markets around the globe would help boost business confidence," he declared.

"Such a policy will go a long way towards restoring growth and stability."

Kassar, also chairman of the General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture for the Arab countries, said a main objective of his two-year tenure would be to use ICC influence to ensure developing countries were not left on the margins of the global economy.

Kassar took over on Jan. 1 as head of the ICC, which has over 7,000 member companies and business associations in 13 countries, from Helmut Maucher, chairman of the Swiss Nestle SA.

Israel, India trade seen over \$1.0 billion in 2000

JAIPUR, India (R) — Bilateral trade between India and Israel is expected to top \$1.0 billion in 2000, a senior Israeli diplomat has said.

"We will achieve our target of crossing a billion dollars of bilateral trade by 2000," Amiram Halevy, counsellor for economic affairs at the embassy of Israel in India told a news conference at an international business summit in this northwestern city.

He said trade between the two nations had reached \$700 million in 1998, from a start of \$200 million in 1992, when India and Israel established diplomatic relations.

Halevy said that 1998 was the first year in which the balance of trade between both countries had become almost equal.

"In the years before 1998, the balance of trade was always in favour of Israel,"

he said.

Over 50 per cent of all trade between India and Israel is made up of diamonds. Halevy said Israel shipped uncut diamonds to India for cutting and polishing, and India shipped finished diamonds to Israel.

He said the trend in trade was starting to change towards other products.

"High technology and electronic products have grown sharply to make up 17 per cent of trade in 1998 from seven per cent in 1997. There is growth in chemicals and agricultural inputs also," he added.

He indicated that there was tremendous scope for Indo-Israeli trade in biotechnology, agricultural products and technology, medicine, and information technology and telecommunications.

Uzi Wellish, counsellor, agricultural affairs at the Israeli embassy, said that

his country was keen to develop agriculture projects, rural development programmes, and arid land and irrigation ventures in India.

"India and Israel are close to finalising two agreements. One is between the government of the state of Punjab and the Dairy Board of Israel to establish a Punjab Dairy Board on the Israeli pattern," he said.

He added that the other agreement close to fruition was between the National Institute of Rural Development in Hyderabad and Israel's Development and Study Centre for an integrated rural planning development concept.

Wellish said Israel was also involved in tailor-made agricultural programmes to promote cooperative and collective farming on the lines of kibbutzim, drip irrigation and greenhouse technology.

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	1.0000	0.1888	0.1927	1.6760	1.8389	0.1945	2.3479	0.2077	0.7080
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UAE DIRHAM	5.1881	0.9784	1.0000	9.7423	9.5405	1.0088	12.1811	1.0776	3.6722
BAHRAIN DINAR	0.5325	0.1005	0.1025	1.0000	0.9792	0.1035	1.2502	0.1105	0.3770
OMAN RIAL	0.5438	0.1027	0.1048	1.0212	1.0000	0.1057	1.2768	0.1128	0.3862
QATAR RIAL	5.1427	0.9708	0.9912	9.6578	9.4569	1.0000	12.0743	1.0881	3.4510
KUWAIT DINAR	0.4259	0.0804	0.0821	0.7989	0.7832	0.0838	1.0000	0.3029	1.3097
Egypt POUND	4.8145	0.5089	0.9280	9.0416	8.8535	0.9362	11.3239	1.0551	3.4973
LEBANON LIRA	21.4831	0.0555	0.1403	40.3448	39.6055	0.1774	60.4394	4.4921	18.2100
US DOLLAR	1.4124	0.2686	0.2722	2.6525	2.5971	0.2746	3.3162	0.3234	1.0000
GERMAN MARK	0.8802	0.1624	0.1658	1.6154	1.5818	0.1673	2.0195	0.5000	1.8673
SWITZERLAND FRAN	2.3835	0.4499	0.4594	4.7671	4.7202	0.4653	6.3051	0.5578	1.9013
FRANCE FRANC	7.9598	1.0000	1.5405	15.0702	16.8989	1.2544	18.7684	1.8603	5.6596
JAPAN YEN	1.5689	0.2962	0.3034	2.2464	2.0851	0.3051	3.6385	1.1106	1.0000
HOLLAND GULDEN	2.3824	0.3274	0.3276	5.0432	4.9393	0.5222	6.3051	0.5578	1.9013
ITALY LIRAS	11.1897	2.1123	2.1568	21.0141	20.5789	2.1768	26.2719	2.3241	7.9223
SWEDEN KRONA	22.5085	4.4544	4.5482	44.3140	43.3521	4.5854	55.4017	4.9011	16.7084
GREEK DRACHMA	48.0082	0.2222	0.2288	61.8486	69.8279	0.5103	114.8300	10.1584	34.6270
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	2.2243	0.4199	0.4287	4.1772	4.0503	0.4325	5.2224	0.4440	1.5748
ROMANIA LEI	3.9510	0.7458	0.7613	7.4198	7.2685	0.7683	9.2764	0.8205	2.7793
CYPRUS POUND	2.6585	0.5068	0.5173	5.0368	4.9349	0.5218	6.3008	0.5574	1.9013
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	15.6760	3.1494	3.2146	31.3210	30.5693	3.2451	39.1577	3.4541	11.8083
CANADA DOLLAR	2.1378	0.4035	0.4120	4.0143	3.9308	0.4157	5.0187	0.4440	1.5134
EIRO	1.2167	0.2301	0.2349	2.2686	2.2410	0.2370	2.8613	0.2531	0.8626

Jordan Times, Monday, January 11, 1999

Philippine leader says 1999 a critical year for economy

MANILA (AFP) — Philippine President Joseph Estrada has said 1999 would be a critical year for the local economy. Despite modest accomplishments last year.

"We have to meet a GNP (gross national product) target of at least three per cent. If we

reach that we will be full steam ahead."

The Philippines became the eighth recession casualty in Asia in November when its gross domestic product (GDP) contracted 0.1 per cent in the three months to September.

Two or more successive contractions in GDP technically means a recession, but Philippine economic managers had argued there was no recession as the country uses GNP as a yardstick of economic growth.

"This year will even be a more critical year for the econ-

omy. It will be a decisive and crucial year in our capacity to overcome the impact of the regional crisis," Estrada said to his nation.

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Business & Finance

Jordan Times, Monday, January 11, 1999 9

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Jordinvest to arrange, underwrite JD3.5m convertible bond issue

JORDAN INVESTMENT Trust (Jordinvest) will arrange and underwrite a convertible bond issue for JD3.5 million to the Union Chemical and Vegetable Oil Industries under an agreement signed between the two sides last week. The agreement was signed by Mohammad Said Nabulsi, chairman and chief executive officer on behalf of Jordinvest and Rajai Al Salfi, chairman of the board, and Mohammad Kamel Abu Arada, member of the board of directors on behalf of Union Chemical and Vegetable Oil Industries (UCVOI). Union Chemical will use the proceeds of the bond mainly to expand its sunflower seeds and soya beans oils facilities, raise its capital, and retire short-term debts.

According to the agreement, Jordinvest undertakes to carry out studies, arrangements and procedures necessary for the bond issue expected to be completed by the end of January 1999. The bonds will be issued in early February having

had the approval of Jordan Securities Commission. The bonds at nominal value of JD10,000 each, will mature after five years from the date of issue at an interest rate of 9.5 per cent annually payable every six months. The bonds can be converted to UCVOI's shares, at the rate JD1.3 each, after three years from the date of issue.

Conditions of issue will be included in the bond issue prospectus which will be published upon completing the procedures and obtaining the approval of the Jordan Securities Commission. Nabulsi said that this agreement is Jordinvest's first in the Jordanian capital market, and the Jordinvest has been approached by several industrial and services companies to perform similar operations. Nabulsi believes that this and other capital financing operations, will make a tangible contribution towards helping industrial and services institutions to overcome their financial difficulties.

Industrialist outlines impediments to marketing

THE HIGH cost of advertisements, the low income level in the Kingdom and the lack of trust in local products and the preference of consumers to buy foreign products are the most important barriers for marketing in the local market, said Basel Sadeq, the commercial manager of the Gulf Foodstuffs Company.

He noted that the local and international markets are in recession but he said the government can ease the effect of recession by limiting the import of foreign-made products that are similar to ones produced in Jordan.

Sadeq said that the high fuel prices and other production costs as well as shipping rates push up the prices of final products and, accordingly, that impedes the penetration of Jordanian products into international markets and weakens the capabilities for competition. He stressed that some trade protocols must be

reconsidered and others must be activated in addition to the importance of reciprocal treatment by neighbouring countries and markets.

The commercial manager criticised the traditional financing methods describing them as a burden on the local industry. He complained, in this regard, of the high interest rates and demanded that they be lowered. Moreover, Sadeq called for looking for more feasible financing methods but, at the same time, he praised the Central Bank's allocation of JD30 million to support local industries that need low-cost financing.

He concluded by urging the government to activate the role of commercial sections at Jordanian embassies abroad and reducing the cost of subscribing to commercial fairs (Al Ra'i).

A.F.M TRADE Sunday, 10-01-99

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Company	Open Price	Closes Price	Change
BANKS			
ARAB BK	217.000	218.000	+ 0.46%
NTL BK	1.540	1.560	+ 1.30%
J.BK OF JO	1.250	1.230	- 1.60%
THE HOUSING BK	2.840	2.800	- 1.41%
JO. KUWAIT BK	1.650	1.650	0.00%
JO. ISLAMIC BK	1.650	1.620	- 2.00%
UNION BK	1.160	1.100	- 5.17%
PHILADELPHIA BK	0.560	0.550	- 1.79%
BANKS INDEX			
	284.990	point =	+ 0.20%
INSURANCE			
JO. FRENCH INS	2.700	2.700	0.00%
PHILADELPHIA INS	2.100	2.000	- 4.76%
AHLIA INS	1.060	1.110	+ 4.72%
INSURANCE INDEX			
	126.090	point =	- 0.22%
SERVICES			
ELECTRIC POWER	1.760	1.750	- 0.57%
IRIBID ELECTRICITY	1.630	1.620	- 0.61%
PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	0.810	0.800	- 1.23%
JO. INT'L TRADING CENT	0.270	0.260	- 3.70%
AL-RAY	5.400	5.400	0.00%
AL-ZARQA FOR EDU	0.850	0.880	+ 3.53%
ARAB INT'L FOR INVEST.	1.940	1.940	0.00%
JO. INVEST. HOLDING	0.850	0.890	+ 4.71%
UNIFIED LAND TRANS	1.160	1.150	0.00%
INDUSTRY INDEX			
	85.620	point =	+ 0.91%
PARALLEL			
JO EXPORT BK (75)	0.910	0.890	- 2.20%
JO. TRADING FACILITIES	0.430	0.410	- 4.65%
CENTRAL STORG	0.330	0.310	- 6.06%
UNION INVES. CORP	0.650	0.680	+ 4.55%
AL - EKBAL	0.810	0.800	- 1.23%
AL - SHARQ	1.080	1.100	+ 1.85%
AL - DAWLIH	0.610	0.600	- 1.64%
ARAB INT'L TRADE	0.270	0.210	- 0.00%
NAMICO	0.260	0.260	0.00%
TEXTILE & PLASTIC	0.260	0.270	+ 3.85%
MIDDLE EAST PHAR (90)	0.600	0.600	0.00%
UNION TOBACCO	2.800	2.810	+ 0.36%
AL - RAZI	0.540	0.540	0.00%
UNITED ENG. IND	0.210	0.210	0.00%
NUTRI DAR	0.690	0.700	+ 1.45%
ARAB JO. INVES	1.020	1.000	- 1.96%

Dow may hit 10,000 soon but may not stay there

NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks were riding an express train to the sky in trading this year, prompting excited speculation that they will soon arrive at the next big milestone, Dow 10,000.

The economy is growing, inflation is low, and investors have piles of cash to invest. All of that makes Wall Street analysts confident that the Dow Jones industrial average will easily add another five per cent in the first quarter of this year and surpass the five-digit mark.

"In 30 to 60 days, we'll be knocking on the door of 10,000," said Marshall Acuff, equity strategist at Salomon Smith Barney.

Despite the enthusiasm, Acuff and others still worry that stock prices may have risen too far, too fast, and that the market's climb has been too dependent on speculation in technology stocks. They also worry that gains in corporate profits will taper off, almost always bad news for stocks.

But right now investors have dollars to invest. Some cashed out of their money-losing stocks last year to take tax writeoffs and now want to put the remaining cash back to work. Others are using year-end bonuses, pay raises, and gifts while still others are making start-of-year contributions to retirement accounts.

Assets in money market funds, where investors often park money until they decide where to invest them, soared by almost \$33 billion in the past week to \$1.4 trillion. That's the largest increase in three months, said the Investment Company Institute, which keeps the figures.

With one-month money market funds yielding around 4.5 per cent, investors will move those funds into higher-yielding investments like stocks, said Rick Jandrain, chief investment officer for equity securities at Banc One Investment Advisors in Columbus, Ohio.

Bulls were vindicated again Friday by a government report that employers added 378,000 jobs in December, the most in 15 months.

"The economy continues just to cook," said

Charles Pradilla, chief investment strategist at SG Cowen Securities.

Still, there is some potential turbulence that could slow the trip to 10K. Continued economic growth will dash any hopes that the Federal Reserve (Fed) will again lower interest rates. Three cuts since Sept. 29 were largely responsible for the market's gains, as the Fed sought to juice the economy.

Another potential pitfall is the recent drop in the dollar, to just over 110 yen on Friday from nearly 148 yen last July. The yen has risen along with Japanese interest rates.

A weaker dollar can boost exports from the United States, but otherwise it is bad news. It could discourage Japanese investors from buying dollar-denominated investments. If it gets low enough, it could pressure the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates.

Higher rates are almost never good for stocks because they raise corporate operating costs and discourage consumer spending. But rates now are so low they have room to rise a little without damaging the stock rally, Pradilla said.

That leaves investors to wrestle with the question of whether the market is too expensive, given the widely

held belief that profits will soften in 1999.

Investors remember a famous admonition from Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan's last summer that the soaring market was the result of "irrational exuberance."

Greenspan was echoed last week by Deputy Treasury Secretary Alice Rivlin, who said that given her expectation of a decline in profit growth this year, stocks are overvalued.

Indomitable bull Abby Joseph Cohen of Goldman Sachs advised investors to trim stock investments slightly, saying prices were "less attractive today than in September," when they were 30 per cent lower.

While Byron Wien of Morgan Stanley Dean Witter suggested the Dow could hit 10,000 as early as this month, he also predicted it will end the year lower than that if the rally continues to be confined to high-flying technology shares. "I am concerned about the narrowness of the advance."

Acuff noted that investors began this past week to broaden their purchases to include financial services, transportation and retail stocks.

"We're getting a little bit better breadth," he said. "And if it continues, it will help."

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Trading on Lebanese bourse down 50 per cent in 1998

BEIRUT (AFP) — Trading on the Beirut Stock Exchange (BSE) was down 50 per cent last year because of the Asian financial crisis and high interest rates on the Lebanese pound, BSE president Gabriel Sehnawi has said.

The volume of transactions went down from \$650 million in 1997 to \$330 million last year, he said.

The crisis at emerging markets prompted foreign investors to retrieve their investments, and high interest rates on Lebanese treasury bonds attracted most savings of the Lebanese and those of some Gulf nationals, he said.

Sehnawi said government plans to privatise a number of public services will help boost trading on the bourse, which reopened in 1996 after a forced 13-year closure during the 1975-1990 civil war.

Before the war there were 42 listed companies

on the exchange, but now that number has dwindled to 12 — with two of those capitalised at under \$3 million.

Sehnawi said the BSE's current capitalisation of \$2.4 billion could be boosted by another billion if major firms such as the Casino du Liban and the ABC supermarket were to start listing their shares on the exchange.

Two new firms are to begin listing on the exchange at the end of January, he said.

Among the firms currently listed are the giant real-estate firm Solidere, the Banque Libanaise pour le Commerce and the Bank of Beirut.

Solidere — the giant real-estate joint-stock company entrusted to rebuild Beirut's war-devastated downtown — suffered the most among BSE shares in 1998, falling in December below its \$10 initial price before recovering slightly earlier this month.

"When Solidere, one of the 100 largest Arab companies, opened up its capital to foreign investors in November 1997, its price went up to \$12.5 and daily bourse activity increased to \$6 million," he said.

But that boost was promptly hit by the Asian financial crisis, he said.

He added that interest rates on treasury bonds have also been hard hit, running at 13.12 per cent on one-year bonds and 16.07 per cent on two-years, down from more than 30 per cent at the bourse's reopening in 1996.

Sehnawi said the BSE's position could be strengthened by taking part in future sovereign and private Lebanese bond issues on international markets.

The Lebanese government and several banks and industrial firms have issued \$3.5 billion in Eurobonds and other notes on the London and Luxembourg stock exchanges since 1994.

With one-month money market funds yielding around 4.5 per cent, investors will move those funds into higher-yielding investments like stocks, said Rick Jandrain, chief investment officer for equity securities at Banc One Investment Advisors in Columbus, Ohio.

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International Handball Federation to discuss Jordan's complaint Jan. 20

By a Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan Handball Federation (JHF) President Sari Hamdan Sunday said the International Handball Federation (IHF) would issue a ruling on Jordan's complaint of its recent "unjust disqualification" from the World Championship finals in its Jan. 20 meeting.

The meeting will issue the IHF decision one week before the draw for the World Championship finals which will be held in Egypt.

Jordan has appealed its case with the IHF after lodging a complaint with the Asian Handball Federation (AHF), after meetings of the Olympic Council of Asia held on the sidelines of the Asian Games in Bangkok in December.

The Kingdom had announced that

it would freeze membership in the AHF if a fair ruling was not reached regarding Jordan's disqualification from the finals.

The JHF president reiterated that Jordan was firm in its stand and quest for a fair solution as it had officially qualified to the finals which will be held in Cairo next June.

Hamdan said "there was a complete disregard to internal regulations and norms, if that continues we have no option but to freeze membership in the AHF."

The issue emerge at the West Asian Qualifiers where hosts Saudi Arabia took first place, while Jordan came runner up and officially qualified.

However, following Jordan's 32-19 win over Bahrain, the technical committee of the championship

announced that Kuwait qualified as runner up when Bahrain's results were cancelled due to technicality in their final match against Jordan.

The technical committee scrapped Bahrain's results at the championship citing that Bahrain had handed Jordan the win by passive play in the second half.

"Bahrain did not pull out nor did it hand us the win. On the contrary they were trying hard to narrow the gap," Hamdan said.

The technical committee of any championship does not have the authority to issue take decisions but should leave that to the federation. Similarly Asian or international regulations do not stipulate cancelling the entire results of a team but rather considering a withdrawing team as loser by a 10-0 score."

Hamdan also pointed out that the

Slovenian referees of the match did not advise that Bahrain had a technical error but it was rather the technical committee who took that decision single-handedly.

Hamdan said Jordan now had a ranking on the map of Asian Handball after recent activity on the club and national team levels. Furthermore, he stressed that the men's and women's teams were training hard for the upcoming Pan-Arab Games in Amman under the new Croatian coach.

Bahrain has meanwhile lodged an appeal with the OCA and the IHF citing "injustice" to the Bahraini team which had players suspended in their match against Jordan before the technical committee cancelled their results.



Sixth seed Steffi Graf returns a shot during a practise round at the White City stadium in Sydney 10 January. It is the first time Graf has played in Sydney since 1984 and she has drawn a first-round match with Japan's Ai Sugiyama (AFP photo)

Broncos stampede Dolphins in NFL playoffs

DENVER (AP) — Reigning Super Bowl champion Denver moved one victory from a return to American football's championship game with a 38-3 romp over Miami here Saturday.

The Broncos, who won their 18th home game in a row, will host the January 17 American Conference title game against Sunday's New York Jets-Jacksonville winner for a trip to the January 31 Super Bowl.

National Football League rushing champion Terrell Davis, kept to a season-low 29 yards by the Dolphin defense in a December 21 loss at Miami, ran for 199 yards and two touchdowns to spark the rout.

Davis scored first-quarter touchdowns on runs of one and 20 yards and Derek Loville added another on an 11-yard run in the second quarter to give Denver a 21-3 half-time lead.

Davis raced 62 yards early in the third quarter to set up Jason Elam's 32-yard field goal, putting the cap on the fourth-best rushing performance in NFL history.

In the fourth quarter, Rod Smith caught a 28-yard touchdown pass from John Elway and Neil Smith returned a fumble 79 yards for a touchdown to complete the Denver rout.

The Dolphins suffered their most lopsided playoff loss, replacing a 38-16 drubbing by San Francisco in the 1985 Super Bowl. The Dolphins have not won a playoff game away from Miami since 1972, going 0-7.

Miami's only points came on Olindo Mare's 22-yard field goal five minutes into the second quarter.

Dan Marino was able to recapture the form that saw him throw for 355 yards and four touchdowns in Miami's regular-season triumph over Denver. He threw for 243 yards but was intercepted three times. Elway threw for 182 yards and a touchdown.

Pippen wants to stay with Bulls

CHICAGO (AP) — Scottie Pippen, whose future plans could play a pivotal role in deciding whether or not Michael Jordan retires, wants to return to the three-time defending NBA champion Chicago Bulls.

Pippen had ripped club management for not signing him to a long-term deal after the Bulls won their sixth title in eight years last June, saying he would not return.

But his attitude has changed, agent Jimmy Sexton said.

"Scottie Pippen will be theirs to lose," Sexton said. "Scottie loves to city of Chicago and the fans. If we can work out a deal that will work for Scottie, we would love to stay there."

Pippen reportedly wants a four-year contract worth \$14 million a year, the richest possible contract under the new owners-union labor deal. With future raises, such a deal could net Pippen an average of more than \$17 million a year over the life of the deal.

Falcons edge 49ers to advance in NFL playoffs

ATLANTA (AP) — Jamal Anderson ran for 113 yards and two touchdowns here Saturday, sending the Atlanta Falcons to their first conference championship game with a 20-18 victory over San Francisco.

Atlanta will face Sunday's Minnesota-Arizona winner on January 17 in a National Football League semi-final, the National Conference title game, for a berth in the January 31 Super Bowl at Miami.

Atlanta coach Dan Reeves, back on the sidelines less than one month after heart bypass surgery, watched Anderson score on runs of 34 and 2 yards to move Atlanta one triumph from an unprecedented Super Bowl trip.

"It's unbelievable. This whole year has been incredible," Reeves said. "We never dreamed we would be in the position we are in. We have just got to take it to the next step."

Atlanta intercepted 49ers quarterback Steve Young three times as the Falcons, 3-13 two seasons ago, won their 10th game in a row and rose to 9-0 at home this season.

"It's a tremendous win for the team," Anderson said. "We overcame all odds and adversity. It's a great feeling."

Anderson, who carried 26 times, dedicated his game to two recently deceased uncles. But he made a major mistake by running out of bounds in the final seconds, stopping the clock to give the 49ers a final chance.

"I didn't want to go out of bounds," Anderson said. "My knee planted funny

and I didn't want to take any chances on blowing my knee out. I knew our defense would get the job done. I wasn't worried about it."

The 49ers had their chance but Young, whose last-second touchdown won a week earlier, did not have another miracle available as Atlanta's William White made a game-clinching interception on the final play.

The 49ers, who have never rallied beyond seven points to win a playoff game, capped a 13-play, 87-yard scoring drive with Young's eighth-yard touch-down run with 2:57 to play.

Ty Detmer threw a two-point conversion pass to Greg Clark to pull the 49ers within the final margin. The conversion began as a kick attempt but the ball was hiked high and Detmer had to leap to grab the ball and then scramble before making the throw.

Danish kicker Morten Andersen booted two field goals after pickoffs to give Atlanta a 20-10 lead.

Eugene Robinson's interception and 77-yard return set up a 29-yard effort late in the third quarter and White's kickoff led to a 32-yard field goal with 10:33 remaining.

For the second playoff game in a row, the 49ers were aided by a controversial official's call that went in their favour.

Late in the first half, Young flipped a lateral to his right side to Terry Kirby, who appeared to lose a fumble that Atlanta defender Chuck Smith ran into the end zone for a 21-0 Falcons

lead.

But officials ruled Kirby

was downed before the

fumble, nullifying the

Atlanta touchdown run-

back.

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Rios concerned by hamstring injury

AUCKLAND (AP) — World No. 2 Marcelo Rios admits he is concerned about a lingering hamstring injury as he puts the final touches on his Australian Open preparations.

Rios defends his Auckland Open title from Monday before heading to Melbourne, where he'll likely be the top seed following the withdrawal of Pete Sampras.

Rios was beaten in the Australian Open final last year by Petr Korda but admits his right hamstring, injured in training 10 days ago, might hold the key to his hopes of a Grand Slam title.

"It was pretty bad last week," Rios said Sunday. "I was trying to practice as well as take some days off, but it is much better now. I'm having it treated twice a day until I play on Tuesday."

Rios, who won seven tournaments in 1998 starting with the Auckland title, said he didn't care about his Australian Open seeding.

"I don't think there is much difference between being No. 1 or No. 2 at the Australian Open because all the players there are pretty good," Rios said.

Rios takes on 66th ranked Romanian Andre Pavel in his first-round match on Tuesday at the Auckland Open.

"He's a strong player, he will be tough and he has been playing well," Rios said.

Second-seeded Spaniard Felix Mantilla, ranked 20, is to play a qualifier in the first round, while third seed Wayne Ferreira, of South Africa, ranked 26th in the world, plays New Zealander Brett Steven.

Sydney International Martínez makes solid start

SYDNEY (AP) — Spain's Conchita Martínez scored an easy straight-sets victory over Australia's Rachel McQuillan in their first-round match at the Sydney International tournament Sunday.

The No. 5 seed won 6-0, 6-3 in one of just two matches on the opening day of the men's and women's Australian Open lead-in tournament.

Alicia Molik continued a big week for Australian teenagers when she upset No. 16-ranked Natasha Zvereva of Belarus 6-3, 6-4.

The 17-year-old's victory followed the impressive run by Australia's world junior champion Jelena Dokic, 15, who helped the country win the Hopman Cup team competition.

Molik set up a second-round clash against Swiss World No. 2 Martina Hingis.

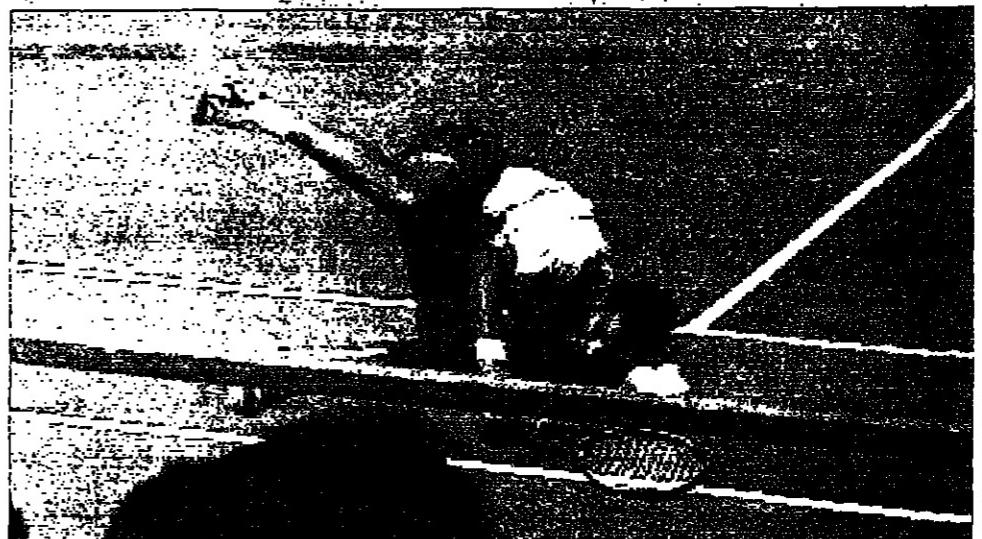
"I've got nothing to lose. I'm the dark horse — she's probably the one with every worry in the world," Molik said.

"I've watched her dominate for so long and it'll be good to see how my game stands up to hers — I'll go out there and play the same way I did today. I think it'll be a good contest."

Molik, who works with former Australia's No. 1 Nicole Bradtke, punished Zvereva's second serve time after time, gaining breaks in the sixth game of the first set and last game of the match.

"What pleased me most was that I didn't let Natasha have a break point," Molik said. "Natasha's got good flair and a lot of touch and she can do a lot of good things but I just stayed with the way I wanted to play, just stay with her."

Eight of the world's top 16 men's players, including Alex Corretja, Pat Rafter and Greg Rusedski, and 17 of the top 20 women will play the tournament on Rebound Ace courts. The Australian Open starts Jan. 18.



Australian Top seed for the Sydney International Pat Rafter takes a fall during a practise with coach Tony Roche 10 January. Rafter was unhurt but he has drawn a first round match with Australia's latest tennis sensation Lleyton Hewitt (AFP photo)

Henman upsets Alami to reach Qatar Open final

DOHA (AP) — Tim Henman stayed on course to complete a perfect launch of his 1999 season here late Saturday when he swept into the final of the \$1 million Qatar Open by defeating Karim Alami.

The top-seeded British player, who is bidding for his fifth career title, now faces German qualifier Rainer Schuttler who saw off France's former Wimbledon finalist Cedric Pioline 3-6, 6-2, 6-2 victory over Moroccan Karim Alami.

An increasingly frustrated Alami, who enjoyed the support of the Doha crowd throughout, earned a warning when he smashed a ball out of court before coming out to serve and stay in the match at 2-5.

Henman squandered three match points but eventually clinched victory when Alami sliced a backhand wide.

"It's been a good start to the year so far," the British

number-one admitted after recovering his poise, spraying the court with some superb winners.

Henman took a stranglehold on the second set when he broke Alami's second service game to lead 3-1, this time doing the damage with two superb lobs.

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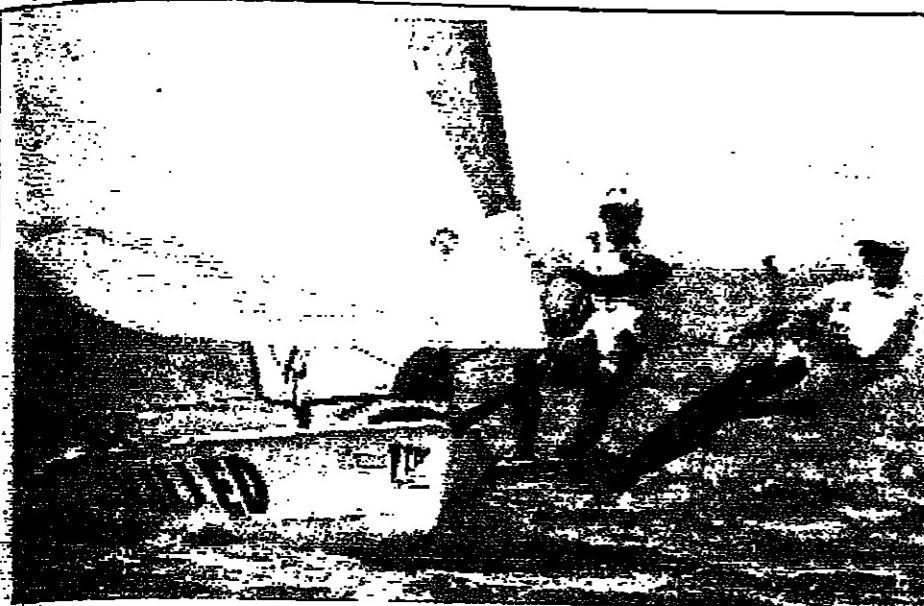
It was his seventh win since arriving in Doha to play in the qualifying event and came just 24 hours after putting out fourth-seed Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia.

Alami did well in the second round, winning the first set after Henman could only manage a long drop. But Rainer's determination — his

finish after a third set from Sergi, his

and an astute backhand when the ball had been made sure that even Guillermo would be ii

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Current world champion Chris Nicholson of Australia (L) and teammate Ed Smith (R) sail to the finish line in an early heat on the first day of the international 49er class sailed in light winds at the 1999 World Sailing Championships on Port Phillip Bay near Melbourne 10 January. A new two-man high performance skiff, the 49ers were recently given Olympic status and is the fastest of all the Olympic classes (AFP photo)

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since 1984

(photo)

Rivaldo at the start double as Barcelona win

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Saudi Arabia, Egypt urge Iraqis to overthrow Saddam

S. Arabia to recommend easing of sanctions

JEDDAH (AP) — Saudi Arabia's official news agency on Sunday urged Iraqis to oust their leader, Saddam Hussein, a call echoed by Egypt's foreign minister.

These were the first statements by Arab nations explicitly demanding Saddam's removal and came in the wake of blistering criticism by President Saddam's regime of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Egypt.

Also Sunday, foreign ministers of Arab Gulf nations began a closed-door meeting in Jeddah to discuss U.N. trade sanctions on Iraq, imposed after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The discussions were behind closed doors, but an official said a Saudi proposal on calling for easing U.N. trade sanctions on Iraq will win wide support. The official spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Saudi proposal could be an effort to show that while it opposes Iraq's regime it is sympathetic to the plight of common Iraqis suffering from eight years of shortages because of the sanctions.

In a commentary released just before the foreign minister's meeting began, the official Saudi Press Agency

accused Saddam of killing and torturing thousands of Iraqis.

Calling him the "Baghdad tyrant," the commentary said it is the "Iraqi people who... need a revolution" to topple Saddam.

The dispatch was signed off by the news agency's political editor, who was not named. Such a sign-off is normally used for columns written by the country's information minister.

In similar comments to be published Monday in a Berlin newspaper, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said Saddam is "shaming the entire Arab region through his policies."

The Berliner Kurier newspaper quoted Musa as saying that "Saddam has caused 'unceasing suffering to his people.'

"Iraq is a rich country that has become poor under Saddam Hussein's regime. We are of the opinion that he is no longer capable of being responsible for his country's politics... Iraq needs a new government," Musa was quoted as saying. A copy of the interview was released Sunday.

In recent days, Iraqi newspapers and officials have accused Egypt of being a U.S.

puppet. On Sunday, Foreign Minister Mohammad Saeed Sabahf accused Saudi Arabia and Kuwait of aiding the U.S.-British bombardment last month on Iraqi defence and other installations.

An indication of the hardened Saudi stand against Iraq came in an article in the Saudi-owned Ashraq Al Awsat newspaper Sunday, which quoted an unnamed Saudi source as saying: "We will not support the Iraqi regime... The Saudi position is to support the Iraqi people."

Ashraq Al Awasat and another Saudi paper, Al Hayat, said the Saudi initiative on easing the U.N. sanctions would propose that Iraq be allowed to buy and sell all goods except military equipment or material that could be used for military purposes.

The U.N. Security Council has said the sanctions will not be lifted until Iraq eliminates its weapons of mass destruction.

Baghdad's relations with a number of Arab countries deteriorated in the aftermath of the Dec. 16-19 airstrikes, which aimed at punishing Iraq for its failure to cooperate with U.N. weapons inspectors responsible for dismantling Iraq's illegal weapons.

U.S. sources confirm key details of UNSCOM-U.S. cooperation: Report

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. officials have confirmed key details of accounts suggesting collusion between the U.S. and UNSCOM over Iraq, U.S. News and World Report said Sunday.

The magazine reported that it has substantiated allegations by former U.N. weapons inspector Scott Ritter that the U.S. heavily influenced the timing and nature of confrontations with Iraq.

In particular it reported that the United States asked for the March 8 inspection of the Ministry of Defence even though Iraq's Deputy Prime

Minister Tareq Aziz warned this would be tantamount to an "act of war."

Chief U.N. weapons inspector Richard Butler met twice-weekly with the U.S. envoy to the U.N., Bill Richardson, to discuss operations by the U.N. Special Commission on disarming Iraq, it continues in its Jan. 11 issue.

And it quotes a U.S. official as saying: "We gave him suggestions. I'm not saying we controlled him, but he took our advice a lot."

On the question of UNSCOM's final critical report on Iraq's compliance with U.N. weapons inspection,

the magazine charges that Butler allowed the United States a "preview."

The preview came one day before the United States used it to justify December's airstrikes on the country during Operation Desert Fox.

Furthermore, throughout 1998 Butler routinely gave Richardson and his successor Peter Burleigh an opportunity to comment on UNSCOM reports before they were delivered to the Security Council, sources told the magazine.

"It collaborated with us on a lot of them," said an American diplomat.

Even those who managed to flee suffered deprivation and hunger as refugees.

The report, "Children in the Firing Line," was timed to coincide with a U.N. working group meeting in Geneva from Monday to discuss raising from 15 to 18 the minimum age for recruitment into armed forces.

"Even a warlord may be persuadable to recognise the rights of children," said Maggie Black, one of a panel of experts at a news conference launching the campaign.

The report details accounts from the likes of a 15-year-old girl, forcibly recruited into the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda.

She told Amnesty she was ordered to kill another child who tried to flee, forced to watch as a boy was hacked to death for failing to raise the alarm, and given 35 days' training before being sent off to fight.

In Sri Lanka, a boy described how, after joining rebel forces aged 11, he once held a child by the legs and bashed its head against a wall, and enjoyed hearing the mother scream.

A study in Rwanda found that 16 per cent of children had had to hide under dead bodies in order to survive massacres.

The report also highlights reports of children being murdered in Afghanistan, Algeria, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kosovo, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone and southern Sudan.

Often the killings were carried out by rebels, but others were perpetrated by government forces. In some cases children were abducted as slaves.

"Millions of children have seen what no human being should ever have to see," said Amnesty campaign coordinator Rob Beasley.

"Hundreds of thousands have been forced to do things not even a trained soldier should have to do."

The report estimates that 300,000 children are active combatants, and 14 million are refugees. It also says children make up over a third of war casualties.

Two million children have been killed in armed conflicts over the last 10 years and at least 10 million have witnessed brutality such as the murder of family members.

Whereas at the start of the century some 90 per cent of war casualties were military, now 90 per cent are civilians, the vast majority women and children.

As well as the risk of death or serious injury, and psychological problems if they survive into adulthood, girls are often used as sex slaves for older soldiers.

Amnesty's campaign is two-pronged. Firstly, to ensure the minimum age for recruitment is raised to 18. Britain, for example, recruits from age 16.

Even if the U.N. group reaches agreement, all it can do is tack an optional protocol onto the 1989 U.N. convention on the rights of the child.

The second goal, Amnesty said, is to get Britain to ban exports of small arms to countries where children are likely to be caught up in conflict.

That would involve more than two thirds of African and Asian countries to which Britain sells small arms, including Turkey, Sri Lanka and Uganda, it said.

In a statement, the Foreign Office insisted export licences were not given if there was a "clear identified risk" that weapons would be used "for internal repression."

It said Britain was privately investigating reports in 20 countries around the world of children under the age of 15 being used in armed conflict.

5-million-year-old human fossil found

Baptism of fire

MOSCOW (AFP) — A Russian Orthodox priest accidentally set off a hand grenade after a bout of drunken toasts at a baptism in a village northeast of Moscow, ITAR-TASS reported on Sunday. The 45-year-old priest had been downing alcohol with the baby's grandmother when he handled the grenade and it went off, a police spokesman in Yaroslavl said. Both were injured. The priest has so far been unable to explain why he ended up holding an explosive device.

Woman jailed for assault with slippers

CAIRO (AFP) — A woman who struck her mother-in-law with slippers after she refused to help her do household chores has been sentenced to three months in jail, judicial officials said. The verdict was issued Saturday by a court in the central Egyptian town of Beni Suef after Zakia Abdul Rahim, 30, hit her mother-in-law Hanem Abdul Meguid with a pair of slippers and scratched her. Abdul Meguid, 60, suffered bruises and was briefly hospitalised.

Benin celebrates voodoo festival

COTONOU (AFP) — Beninese celebrated an annual voodoo religious festival on Sunday, heading for the historic beach of Ouidah to pray to the god Maha for a peaceful 1999. Several ceremonies had already taken place at Ouidah on Friday at the home of Daagbo Houman, one of the leaders of the cult which has been devout following across this former French colony. Voodoo adepts, public personalities and some 200 visitors from Haiti, Ghana and Nigeria turned out at Ouidah and beaches in the capital Cotonou and Fidjrosse.

At least 16 dead in violence in Algeria

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's secularist parties, under heavy pressure from a military alarmed by rising Islamist activism and political parades, on Sunday appeared close to a deal to form a new government after weeks of chaos.

Leftist leader Bülent Ecevit, a staunch secularist who has refused to deal with the Islam-based Virtue Party, said he had gathered sufficient support from conservative parties to form an interim government.

The warning, clearly directed at the Islamists, was contained in a 14-page pamphlet with the deceptively banal title "Daily Issues" and distributed to Turkish newspapers in a press kit.

"Our democracy will be strengthened if political formations that will destroy democracy by abolishing secularism are banned," the

mass-circulation daily Sabah quoted the pamphlet as saying.

"No democracy would be obliged to allow a political formation that uses democratic means to destroy it," the pamphlet said. The constitutional court outlawed Virtue's predecessor last year for trying to subvert the secularist constitution.

The warning, clearly directed at the Islamists, was contained in a 14-page pamphlet with the deceptively banal title "Daily Issues" and distributed to Turkish newspapers in a press kit.

While the secularist vote is split between a number of bickering left- and right-wing parties, the Islamists are united and control an efficient campaigning machine that garners significant support

from Turkey's urban poor.

Turkey has been without an established government since November, when the conservative-led coalition of Mesut Yılmaz was toppled in a parliamentary vote over corruption allegations.

If Ecevit can form a government it is only expected to stay in office until April when elections are scheduled, 20 months before they would normally be due.

Newspapers at the weekend also quoted from a training manual issued at an army academy that referred to the war that established Turkey as a secular republic on the wreckage of the Ottoman Empire early this century.

"A new War of National Liberation must be launched

with determination against Islamic activism that threatens the secular republic," the manual was quoted as saying.

Turkey's secularist establishment, who look to the army for leadership, suspect the Islamists of wanting to replace the secularist national charter with one based on Islamic law.

The military pronouncements followed a series of warnings from senior generals in recent weeks about Islamist activism and continued political instability.

Conservative powerbroker and True Path Party leader Tansu Ciller, in rare criticism of the army, said last week the generals should not comment so frequently on domestic politics.

Woman backed over child from dead husband

LONDON (R) — A British woman who gave birth to a baby boy after she was impregnated with sperm from her dead husband said on Sunday she had received 500 letters of support from around the world. Diane Blood named the baby Liam Stephen Blood after his father, Stephen, who died of meningitis in 1995. The child was born on Dec. 26, a month premature. She told BBC Television: "Following the birth of Liam I have had around 500 cards and letters from people I don't know from all over the world. One from Australia said the dead man could be buried in peace."

Butler surveilla

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Leading Albanian

Kosovo not dead

Peacekeepers gain

Sierra Leone

Village in border

one hit by

mortar fire

ADDIS ABABA (AP) — Fossils of a prehistoric man believed to be 5 million years old have been discovered in northeastern Ethiopia, a newspaper report said Sunday. A team of researchers representing 13 countries found the fossils in the Awash Valley, where the 3.2 million-year-old partial skeleton known as Lucy was discovered in 1974. One of the researchers, Professor Tim White of the University of California at Berkeley, described the latest find as "extraordinary." Dr. Berhane Asfaw, an Ethiopian member of the team, said a human skull believed to be 2.1/2 million to 3 million years old also was found at the site.

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